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ABSTRACT

The articles in this publication trace the historical development of the theatre workshop, explain the relationship between the workshop and experimental theatre, and analyze the ways in which current drama workshops teach and develop the dramatic skills of the participants. The topics discussed include the special skills, production-oriented, and self-exploration workshops; a technique that trains actors in a neutral atmosphere and requires them to wear neutral masks; the Suzuki method, which is based on the acting techniques of Kabuki theatre; a technique that relates abstract and actual space to acting; experiments in discourse-making according to devices developed by Bertolt Brecht; a "Theatre of Roots" workshop led by Ryszard Cieslak; and public participatory events that involved the rituals of walking and flying. The drama "Rasputin," by Erwin Piscator, is discussed in two separate articles: one deals with the original production, the other with a technical recreation of the drama. The publication also includes reviews of six new books on the dramatic arts. (MAI)

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Workshop Issue

Volume22 Number4 December 1978

Thematic Issue: Workshops

Michael Kirby
Editor

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Workshop Issue

An Introduction

With this issue on Workshops, *The Drama Review* continues its interest in the practical aspects of performance and performance training. Hopefully, the issue will be useful to those who are actually working in theatre; it may also be theoretically interesting—helpful in understanding and explaining much recent performance that has developed from workshops. Ron Argelander's article, which follows, could well serve as an introduction to the issue. It provides a general overview of the workshop phenomenon that has become in recent years such an important aspect of the new theatre.

For the issue, "workshop" has been taken in a very broad sense. Thus we can justify inclusion of a description of productions of Brecht's *Fatzer* because the work was done without an audience; everyone participated in the *Lehrstück* or "teaching play." We also include two articles on paratheatrical work. Although it is difficult or impossible to call these paratheatrical workshops "actor training," they have developed from theatre, are used primarily by theatre people, and many seem to find in them a relevance to performance. In paratheatre, perhaps, the workshop itself becomes the performance.

M.K.

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Perfor-mance

Workshops: Three Types

By Ron Argelander

One of the most frequently encountered words in the avant-garde theatre community

has become the term "workshop." Everywhere one turns, there is talk of a new workshop being offered, or of so-and-so's workshop of last summer, or desperate inquiries of young actors concerning whether so-and-so is giving another workshop soon, and if so how does one get in? Clearly, the experimental theatre workshop is now a popular phenomenon rather than the exclusive domain of a select few. Publications such as Viola Spolin's *Improvisation for the Theatre* (1963), Jerzy Grotowski's *Towards a Poor Theatre* (1968) and Robert Pasolli's *A Book on the Open Theatre* (1970) have been responsible for disseminating workshop ideas to mass audiences, while many groups' early touring efforts helped to reach audiences and actors who might never have found out that an alternative form of theatre existed.

Whatever the cause, more and more young actors are looking to the avant-garde for exciting new ideas and techniques in order to enrich their acting work. In some, this search amounts to a desire to cross over permanently from traditional theatre into experimental; for others it is simply a way to acquire supplementary training to satisfy their curiosity or increase their marketability as performers. The demand for this type of training is increasing.

The theatre workshop is a major characteristic of experimental theatre, as well as its means of "teaching" various techniques within the genre. It is the *only* effective way, apart from apprenticing to a company, of receiving training in such skills and production techniques. Unlike commercial theatre with its acting schools, the avant-garde has traditionally had no fixed "schools" of thought regarding performance technique or training. Quite the opposite, in fact, is true. Responsibility for the training theory and esthetics has been entirely in the hands of numerous professional companies, who offer workshops sporadically within their heavy touring and production schedules. Quite often, what is taught is simply what is working for the group at the time, and this may not follow any structured plan other than that of the individual group's own process of exploration. Still, as elusive as it is, the individual workshop reflects the creative process of experimental theatre. It has provided an alternative to both the training system and the production process of commercial theatre. Since it can be a place where judgment is suspended, and personal values explored, it has become synonomous with the concept of the "secure workspace"—a place where one can explore new techniques, exchange skills, or explore one's personal depth.

As a model, then, the workshop is generally understood in avant-garde theatre as it was years ago, when it only referred to small handicraft shops. Implicit in this earlier definition of the workshop was that it was a place where one experimented with materials and shared construction ideas with close friends and family. Ultimately it was a closed system in which craft was taught by trial-and-error in a special workspace designated for that purpose. The skills taught were individualistic and the teaching personal and practical. Historically, the theatre workshop was organized within a loosely structured performing group; the workshop itself functioned in two basic capacities: first and foremost, as a place to get away from dogmatic acting classes in order to explore new ideas and, second, as a practical way to make a production that could reflect the personal values of the group rather than the standard theatrical values of commercial theatre.

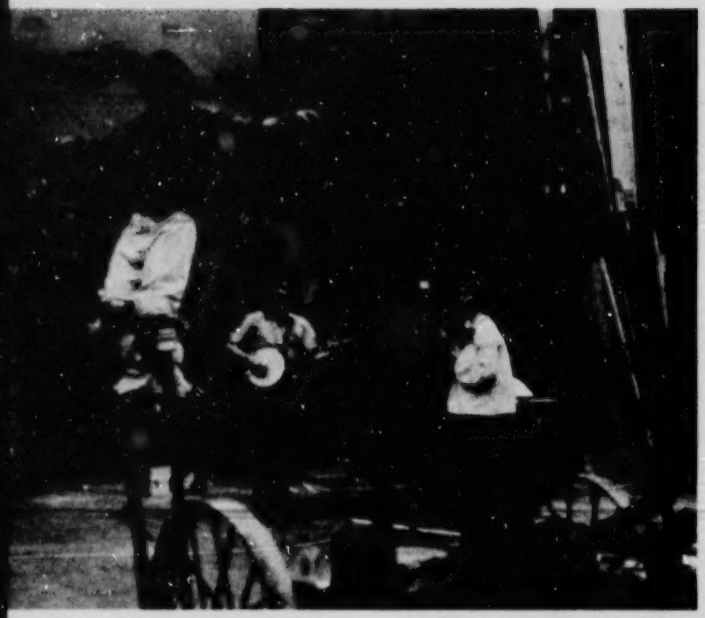
In a 1964 interview (T26) Joseph Chaikin explained why he and members of the newly formed Open Theatre left the restricting atmosphere of the method acting class after many years to form their own acting workshop. He stated that while he was unable to reconcile the various interpretations being taught, he did learn how not to teach acting from the general attitude of his teachers.

Each teacher maintained that his technique was suitable for all material—contemporary and classic, every period and all styles. They assured us that the only problem was to understand the approach and practice it steadily and faithfully. My biggest disappointment was in the smugness of all my teachers; they accepted a predefined, but rarely stated, limitation on the art . . . Stanislavsky sought a freedom that none of the New York acting teachers seem to want, let alone work for. The New York classes accept naturalism as the touchstone of theatre (naturalistic Aschylus and Shakespeare, etc.). Our teachers have "arrived," and they never think of moving towards something new.

In contrast to the acting class, where everything at times seems to be known and systematized, the experimental theatre workshop has traditionally thrived on the unknown, the new discovery, the unexplored and, indirectly, the noncommercial. Chaikin points out that the Open Theatre workshop did not try to make the members of the group better "commodities," made no attempt to prepare actors for "type-casting" and the "general artlessness" of commercial theatre. "We are not going to trim ourselves," states Chaikin, "for a market we despise . . . We are together as an ensemble, attempting to widen what seems to be a very fixed vision of theatre."

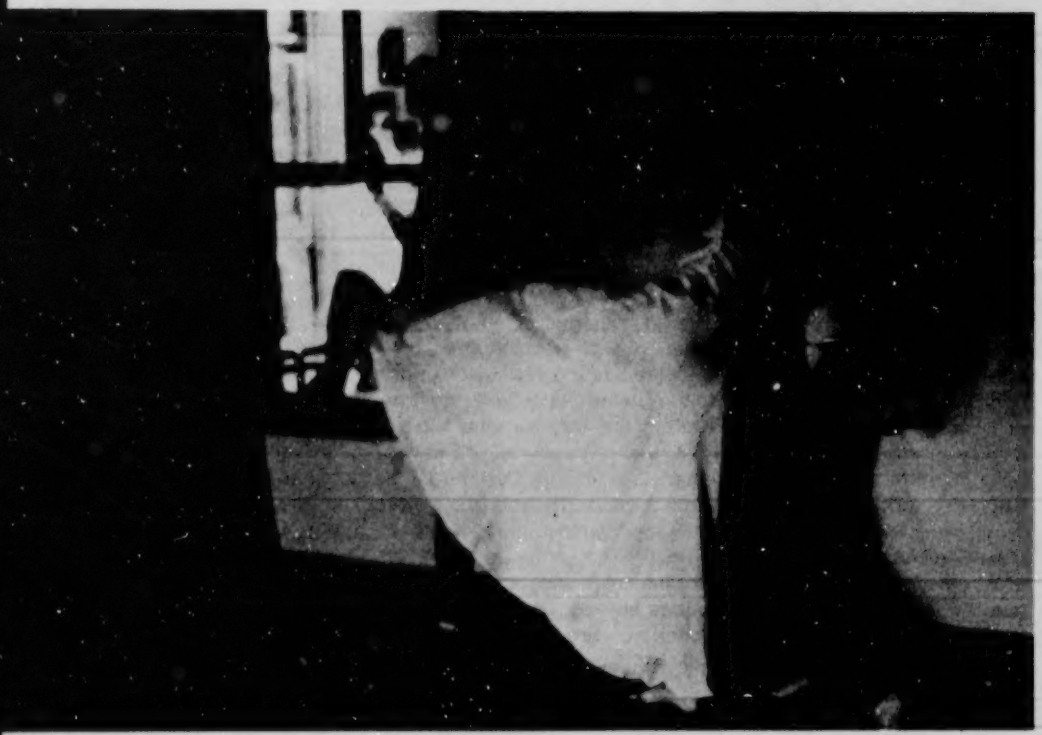
Workshops like the Open Theatre Workshop became models for bringing into existence nearly all of the experimental theatre groups. What was brought into each workshop situation, however, differed from group to group. Generally, though, the sources arose from an increased interest in historical and contemporary figures in theatre who proposed alternatives to psychological realism. Pioneers such as Viola Spolin drew her inspiration from Neva Boyd's extensive research in creative group play—games, storytelling, and folk dance—in developing her famous "non-psychological" Theatre Games approach to actor training and rehearsal. Jerzy Grotowski's research led him to Delsarte, Stanislavsky's "physical actions," Meyerhold's Bio-mechanical training, Oriental theatre, and Yoga before arriving at a style and training technique that could be clearly identified as that of the Polish Lab Theatre. A similar process is evident in the history of the San Francisco Mime Troupe's development of "Brechtian" acting style through explorations of Moliere and *commedia dell'arte;* and in Joseph Chaikin's unique combination in the Open Theatre workshop of Brechtian presentational/narrative style with rhythmic sound-and-movement technique and character transformations developed under the influence of Nola Chilton and Viola Spolin.

In every group situation, the sources came together differently, and, as each distinctive style emerged, the groups offered workshops that in turn served as source material for other artists involved in the same process of exploration. A classic case in point was Grotowski's first visit to the United States in November, 1967, at the invitation of NYU's School of the Arts. During his stay he conducted a four-week intensive workshop that included the full range of physical training as well as the theory underlying much of the work of the Polish Lab Theatre. Among the participants were those who later formed The Performance Group, Theatre X in Milwaukee, the Manhattan Project and Shaliko. Richard Schechner frankly admits that each day he went directly from Grotowski's workshop to a group of actors he was working with at the time (some of whom later became The Performance Group) and taught them everything he had learned. In this way, new techniques spread, giving rise to new groups who in turn, through workshops, gave rise to other new groups, until a network of groups, styles and techniques began to define roughly the parameters of the avant-garde. The workshop,



(1) Special Skills Workshops. Stilt-walking and music at a Peter Schumann workshop in California, 1975.

Three types:



(2) Production-Oriented Workshops. Anne Bogart's "Phasing" technique at Iowa Theatre Lab, 1978.

(3) Self-Exploration Workshops. Ben F. Carney's paratheatrics activity at a workshop in the Catskill Mountains, 1978.

rather than the acting class, became the primary way of learning skills or exchanging ideas within the genre.

It is important to keep in mind that most workshops developed over the last fifteen years were initially production tools and in many instances still retain that function within the group. The workshop approach did not come about in order to teach others how to do what the group was doing but arose out of a necessity to discover a new way for that group to explore various ideas internally and then, ultimately, to make a production with them. Only after the establishment of a clearly defined relationship between workshop, rehearsal and production, did the "teaching workshop" emerge clearly as an entity separate from a specific group's process of creation.

The teaching workshop invariably became simply a formulated way of sharing the special skills and techniques the group or artist had used to deal creatively with performance material. Speaking for Mabou Mines in an article, "How We Work" (*Performing Arts Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 1), Lee Breuer, the company's director, takes a somewhat humorous but accurate look at the various components of his "teaching workshop":

> *We teach the smorgasbord. Because that's what academics pay for. And we need the bucks. The smorgasbord is a familiar buffet. Say platter by platter left to right to front row. Grotowski plastiques and corporelles. Brecht distancing theory. Some things like Biomechanics. Masking. Motion-time variables slow fast and cadred. Kathakali and Bunraku staging ideas. New dance. Minimal art. Sports. Film technique as theatre metaphor. The visual pun. Rear left to right. Psychology as performance logic. Formalism as a performance logic. Rock and roll. Notably Little Richard. New music. Notably Phil Glass. Personalization as Stanislavsky explored it. Depersonalization. Process art. Sound and recording technology. Pop mixed media. Unmixed multimedia. The language of Samuel Beckett. Arc welding (that didn't quite work). Collaboration. Virtual isolation. Even good old timing and characterization. In other words. The stuff we've played with. The things that have worked for us.*

Although Breuer is only speaking for Mabou Mines, he could easily be representing dozens of others whose work has been influenced in a similar way and who share at least part of that checklist of skill/technique offerings in their own "teaching workshop."

Generally, workshops can be seen to fall roughly into three types: (1) Those that teach special *skills;* (2) those that are *production-oriented,* in that the teaching involves (a) putting a production together within the workshop, or (b) working with specific exercises that demonstrate specific techniques for developing a structured piece or composition; and (3) those workshops in which the focus is on the process of *self-exploration.*

Clearly, these are not mutually exclusive categories. A production workshop, for example, led by Charles Ludlam may involve exercises exploring "special skills" such as comic timing, sense-memory (after Proust), specific acting styles and clowning, as well as "compositional techniques" from movies, plays and *commedia dell'arte* that the Ridiculous Theatrical Company uses in developing character, plot and dialog. "Special skills" workshops such as those in plastiques and corporeals invariably lead to improvisation structures typical of performances presented by the Iowa Theatre Lab and other Grotowski-influenced improvisation-based groups. Similarly, in "Self-exploration," such as the Paratheatrics workshops offered by the Polish Lab Theatre, one may "learn" skills such as plastiques and corporeals as well as explore certain principles of ritual performance structure, environmental space usage, or group participation techniques. However, no matter what is "learned," it is important that each type of workshop have a primary focus. Time limitations usually dictate this. If the goal is production, one does not stop to explore "self" or play around with the "skills" in a way that does not lead toward the goal; if self-exploraton through personal experience is the objective, then one does not decide, in the middle, to do a production or to explore skills beyond what is necessary to achieve the workshop objective.

Special Skills Workshops

The area of special skills is perhaps the most familiar and needs the least discussion here. What is taught is specific, almost standardized. Many skills such as juggling, clowning, acrobatics, and mime are imbued with a traditional esthetic quality that leave little room for deviation from the norm. They are learned, as one learns a sport or a musical instrument, with the objective of "learning how to play it." Other skills, such

as Tai Chi Chuan and Yoga also have strict formal characteristics, in the sense that every position has a traditionally proven effect on the inner self and therefore must be executed in a specific way. While the teaching can be dogmatic, the objective is not simply to master the technique, but to develop the ability to use the skill in exploring the inner self. In certain other physical training skills, particularly Grotowski's plastiques and corporeals, what is emphasized is *not* the form but the *way* one does it. The position (element) in corporeals, for example, is only the basic outline for a personal negotiation with balance. So, quite naturally, when the elements of corporeals and details of plastiques are learned, they give rise to any number of personal esthetic interpretations, all of which may be considered "correct."

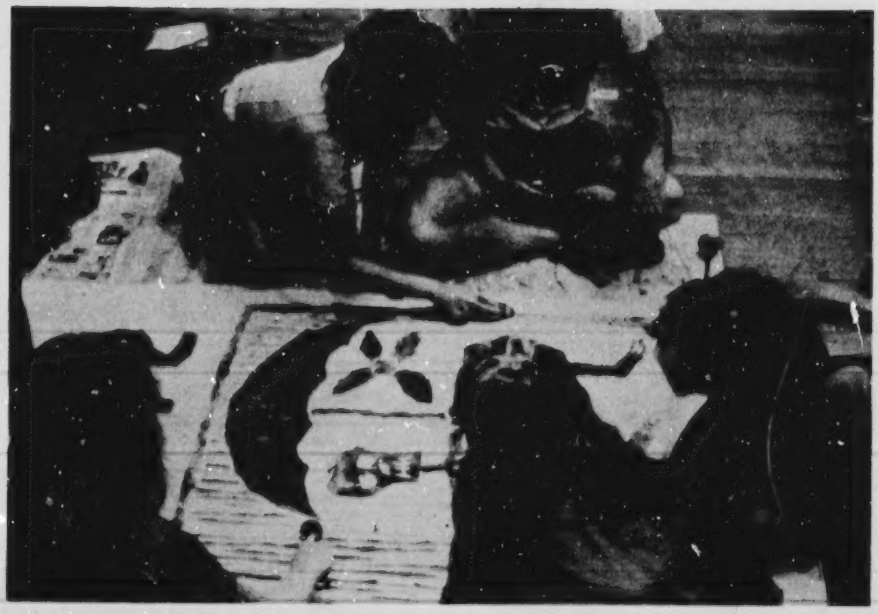
Basically, isolated special skills function, as does learning how to use tools in a handicraft shop, as a technical means to self-exploration. They provide the actor with at least the basic building blocks for self-expression, if not the overall conceptual or structural framework necessary to build a complete piece with them.

Production-Oriented Workshops

The basic assumption underlying the workshop in which production is the goal is that the skills and technique cannot be easily separated from the esthetic of the artist or the original motivation of the group to perform. Usually, it makes no sense to teach the kinds of skills connected to the work of the group unless you experience how they all come together *in* performance. For example, Peter Schumann's workshops invariably involve making a short production in Bread and Puppet style. Of course the work involves learning skills like banner-making, mask-making, etc., but the technical elements themselves are empty without a performance.

A workshop Schumann did with students at the University of California in Davis in 1975 was structured around the idea of presenting a memorial performance dedicated to Ishi, the last of the Yano Indians. Throughout the workshop, however, there was little talk of Indians or genocide. Instead, Schumann organized all activity around site selection and preparation, rehearsal of Sacred Harp music, and the building of physical properties from celastic, wood and cloth. The properties to be built included a herd of white deer puppets, witch masks, black butcher's costumes with cardboard top hats and false noses, two trumbil carts upon which were constructed large businessmen puppet figures, and dozens of hand-printed banners.

Club



The first week was spent on supervised construction, during which workshop members got a chance to participate in every stage of development of the physical properties. Finally, when a few banners and deer were ready, movement rehearsals began—first with some exercises and drills in banner waving, then movement exercises with the small number of deer simply to see how they looked when they moved. Construction continued until the day of the performance, as did rehearsal.

Finally, the day before the performance, a complete scenario emerged from rehearsal, just about the same time the sourdough bread was rising in a large vat in the middle of the workspace. The elements seemed to be coming together. But still the Indian topic was not brought up, except for an occasional asking of where Ishi was. For many, a very important issue was being overlooked.

It was not until the performance of the completed scenario—which included a noisy parade through town, clown acts, stiltwalking and, finally, a long sequence in which the herd of white deer were ritually slaughtered by breaking their antlers—that the participants finally felt the power of Peter Schumann's theatrical way of making a statement about cultural genocide. It was the performance that brought all the seemingly disconnected production elements together, to present a clear statement not only about the subject but about how the Bread and Puppet works.

Along similar lines, yet in quite a different style, is Charles Ludlam's "*Commedia* workshop." Again the focus is on production as a goal, because it is in performance that so many of the comic improvisation skills develop to their fullest. In terms of organization, he usually asks that the workshop participants "pretend" that they are a repertory

company patterned after the *commedia*-type professional troupes, that each member apprentice to a member of the company, and that, under his direction, they generate a script from historical *commedia* scenarios, *lazzi* and gags, tied together with contemporary everyday experience. Clearly what Ludlam offers is temporary ensemble training along the lines of what has worked for the Ridiculous Theatrical Company.

Other workshops within this category, while not focused on production as such, explore specific production esthetics and techniques that are peculiar to the work of a group or artist. Again, the workshop is based on the assumption that the skills can not be easily separated from the esthetic of the artist, but production is not essential. For example, a brief description of Meredith Monk's workshop offered at the Center for Theatre Practice in New York reads:

> *Meredith Monk will concentrate on detailed vocal and musical work, as well as on natural movement, as ways of translating perceptions of space and environment into a composite theatrical tapestry. The workshop exercises will deal with images of ritual, metaphor and personal myth.*

If one is familiar with Monk's work, reading this description gives a fair idea that the workshop will include idiosyncratic vocal work, probably leading to exercises with vocal qualities found in *Voices from the Hill;* that it will also include techniques of utilizing "Personal Myth" (as material) similar to that seen in *Education of a Girl-Child* or *Quarry*; and that, finally, her ideas about organization of space and visual imagery will enter the workshop. Ultimately, one will experience the techniques Monk uses to assemble a performance piece in her own unique way.

While Schumann, Ludlam and Monk are very different stylistically, what they share on a deep artistic level is a distinctive esthetic control over every aspect of their work. This is the main differentiating factor between their workshops and those of the final category of production-oriented workshops. The primary objective of the workshop techniques in this category is to teach the *compositional process* as a technique, rather than as an extension of a specialized esthetic sensibility. This is not to say that those referred to here do not have strong esthetic sensibility, but only that their compositional techniques, once learned in workshop, can be personalized easily and used by someone else.

Mabou Mines workshops, for example, do not rest on the vast array of "smorgasbord" offerings listed earlier, nor on peddling their diverse production esthetics, but rather on the significant compositional processes developed by the group to deal with the array of source material available to their own work. One of these techniques is "tracking," which they also teach in workshop.

Derived from film and music mediums, tracking is a technique in which one element of visuals, music, text, etc. is "laid down" as a "track" temporally (along a time sequence) as in the recording process in a music studio; then others are juxtaposed on parallel tracks, creating effects of simultaneity, layering, counterpoint and transposition from track to track. The idea, while seemingly similar to Wilson's organization of visual material on parallel planes, is different in that the visual organization of tracked material is not so literally structured in space. Tracking is a conceptual process and may therefore be applied to more areas of the creative process than just the overall structure of the work.

As an acting technique, tracks may be thought of as containing the specific elements of characterization, movement, gesture, dialog, etc., that form the composite "score" for each performer. This approach allows the performer to make adjustments in one track in complete isolation from the other tracks. Tracking, in this sense, is clearly a metaphor for technical isolation of expressive units of the performer's art and a technique for consciously controlling and "mixing" each. The potential for exploration in acting using this technique is great. The theory, of course, is Grotowskian, in the sense of the potential for highly controlled expression through isolated parts, and Brechtian, in the sense that these parts can convey different, even contrasting, information to the audience.

As a playwriting tool, tracking allows multiples of ideas/images to be developed simultaneously within a single overall structure; in terms of directing, the technique allows the director to function more along the lines of a recording engineer, where "mixing" takes place between tracked elements. It's a relatively neat way to work, and, as a workshop technique, it accomplishes roughly what it has for the company: it provides an organized way of dealing creatively with the richness and diversity of material at hand without losing a sense of work *process* or overall *structure*.

Anne Bogart, a young director from New York, has also developed a systematic way of utilizing music methodology to develop compositional excercises for theatre workshops. During a three-week workshop at the Iowa Theatre Lab's August Moon gathering, she developed and applied a technique called "Phasing." This is the compositional step in a four stage process that she had used earlier in the year, in a project called the "Waves," to develop a single production from three solos. The workshop exercise is geared to generate material and structure from the group and to develop quickly to a level where it begins to exhibit the characteristics of a performance piece. Briefly, this is how the technique works in a single exercise:

> ***Stage. 1. Generating Physical Structure.*** *Each workshop participant is asked to write out five stage directions. In this step, the bare outline of each unit in the phasing process is determined by the participants.*
>
> ***Stage 2. Making Individual Performance Pieces.*** *The stage directions are exchanged so that each participant has someone else's directions. The group is given 15-20 minutes to develop a performance piece using only the stage directions given them. In this step what enters is personal (creative) interpretation of another's physical script. The participants make a short personal theatrical statement within someone else's structure.*
>
> ***Stage 3. Performing the Piece.*** *Each piece is then performed for the rest of the group. In this step, the group sees how the bare stage directions have been filled out by the imagination of other members of the group.*
>
> ***Stage 4. Phasing.*** *One at a time the individual pieces are combined, phasing them in at different times; repeating one if it is short, slowing others down, adjusting and weaving them together. The objective is* not *to change the stage directions—those form the structure of each unit—but rather to look for moments of connection within the given combinations of units, to build a piece from the simplest of materials.*

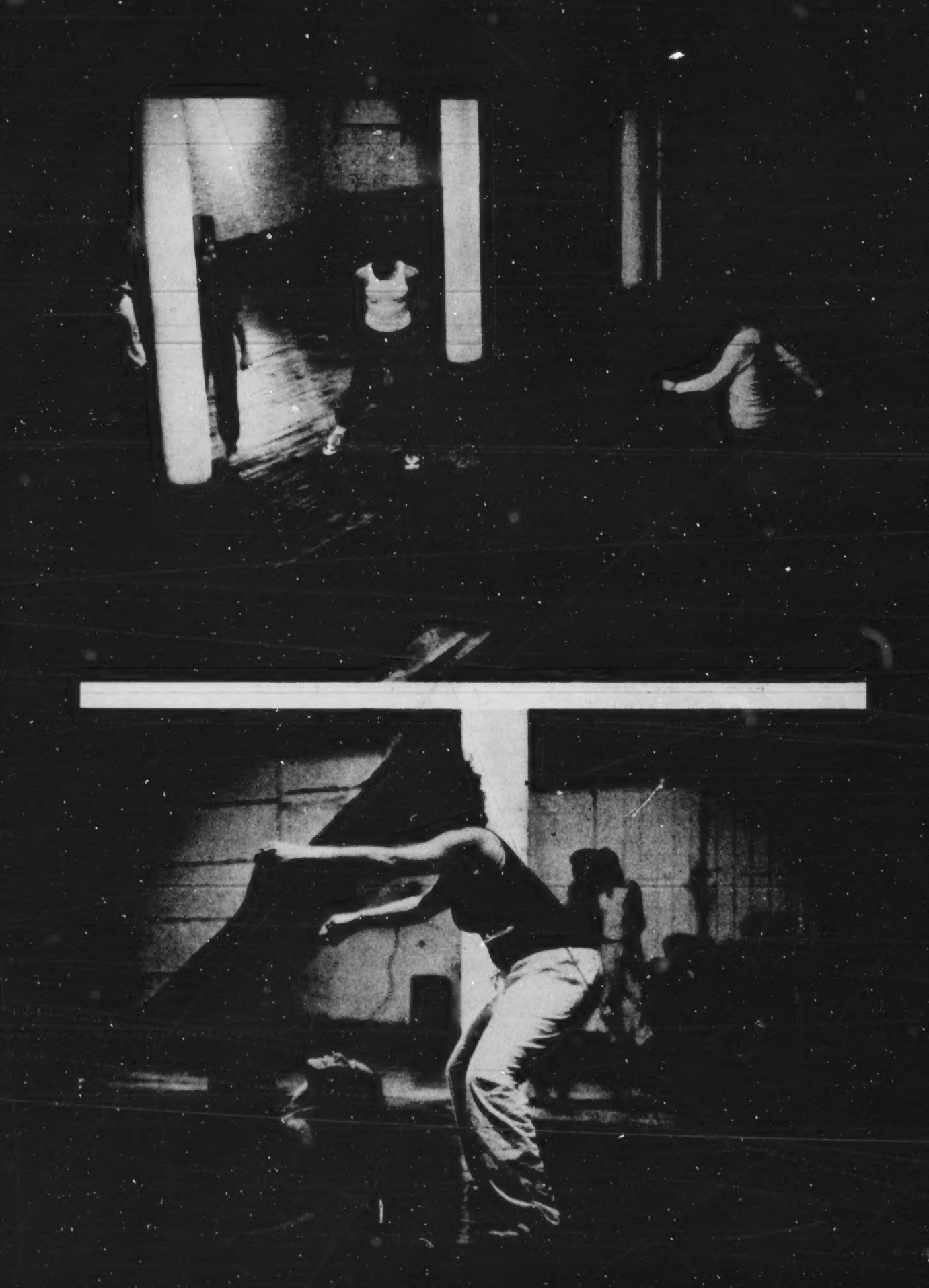
Norman Taffel's "Performance Design" also shares certain strong affinities with musical composition technique, but transposed more literally to spatial and rhythmic structures. His compositional technique is taught in terms of a basic A-B-A musical structure; much of the verbal and behavioral design is strongly influenced by concepts such as pulse, tempo, and thematic recapitulation, all musical terms. As in the tracking techniques of Mabou Mines, Taffel's conception of "design" spans the gamut from the fine details of gestural and rhythmic design of the performer's art to the overall spatial and conceptual design of a piece.

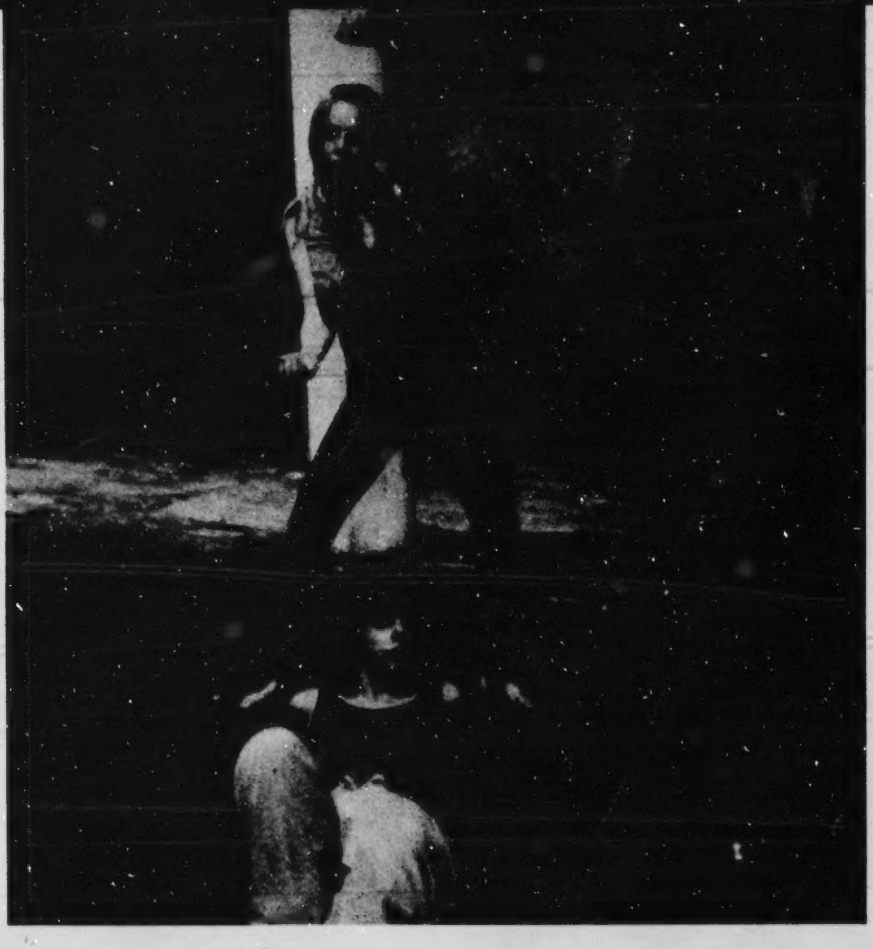
A flyer circulated in Spring 1977 outlines the basic objectives of Taffel's "Performance Design Workshop":

> *The workshop deals with* creating *a design and* performing *it. We'll be exploring structure as well as the performance dynamics that bring it to life.*
>
> *Initially, we'll work with SPATIAL DESIGN (creating floor patterns and giving you a sense of moving in a performance path).*
>
> *Then an overlay of accent points will take us into both* VERBAL DESIGN *(with its focus on rhythm and pitch) and* GESTURAL *or* BEHAVIORAL DESIGN *(response to partners, space and text).*
>
> *There's no clear demarcation when our focus shifts from the structure to its performance—one creates equally on the floor and off. Concept is continuously modified by pragmatic floor work—which in turn opens you conceptually.*

From a practical point of view, spatial, verbal and behavioral design is arrived at through a series of relatively simple exercises geared to draw attention to the fact that everything we do has design built into it, the task is only to distill the elements—to discover the design and redesign consciously.

One basic exercise (or series of exercises) begins (1) with walking the circle, or a basic geometric floor pattern, with concentration until the flow (path) is smooth and strong, then (2) creating accents at regular intervals of one-quarter of one-eighth of the





circle. The next step (3) is to bring in a simple activity like eating an apple, singing a song, or a few lines of text, and walk the basic floor pattern, pausing to repeat the lines or do the activity, and returning to the basic floor design, back and forth, until the smaller activity, like the basic floor design, begins to exhibit a strong definition as a "design." The final step (4) is to discover new accent points—based on the two activities—on the basic floor pattern and to express these new accents as the vocal points of a "Performance design." This unit, then, could form the "A" in another sequence in which a composition is built according to the ABA methodology.

Basically, the ABA, as a compositional technique, can be defined as the process of beginning with Theme A, going to Theme B and its variations, then returning to theme A, transformed by the experience of the B. A simple example: Beginning with walking the circle (A), one then moves to a straight-line shape (B) and explores that, then returns to the circle (A), carrying accents, rhythm, timing, etc., from the straight lines that transform the circle. This is the simplest form of spatial composition. Clearly, if other activities are developed within the ABA (circle—straight line—circle) composition, as they are frequently in the workshops, one has a relatively complex composition, built from quite simple means.

"Phasing," "Tracking" and "Performance Design" are only three examples of special compositional techniques available in workshops today. While these techniques are intimately connected to their originators, they can be taught as production techniques, taken from the workshop, and used as valuable tools by others. More important, however, is the fact that these techniques are not as tightly bound to a particular esthetic as are those one might learn from Schumann, Ludlam, or Monk. Because of this, these

"pure" compositional techniques may lend themselves better to those artists who need means to express their own esthetic sense more freely and, perhaps, come up with something new.

Self-Exploration Workshops: Paratheatrics

The final category consists of those workshops in which the major focus is *self-exploration.* This kind of workshop is not based on "self-help" techniques but rather on personal exploration of human values within a small group structure. Historically, this includes Moreno's psychodrama [T69], Dance Therapy—specifically the work of Anna Halprin's San Francisco Dancers' Workshop [T44, T69],—and Dream Theater. What dominates this field of theatrical self exploration today, however, is a genre of workshops grouped under the general heading of "Paratheatrics."

Paratheatrics is basically a workshop idea that was first introduced to this country by Grotowski in 1972 and implemented by him as a workshop in Philadelphia in conjunction with performances of *Apocalypsis* in September, 1973. On a theoretical and prescriptive level, Grotowski's first statement about such a workshop (T58) is vague. He refers only to the broad human need for people to make contact with one another, to find a place where communion is possible, where theatre will be done away with, as will shame and fear and the need to hide oneself. It will be a meeting, states Grotowski, not a confrontation but a "common holiday." There was never a precise definition of what these "Holiday" workshops would involve, and those participating were encouraged not to talk freely about their experiences with others. Yet, a general understanding of the phenomenon has developed during the last five years.

Basically, "Paratheatrics" (or what Grotowski now calls "Active Culture") is a carefully structured retreat from the everyday world, during which a small group of specially selected participants live in isolation, usually in a country house or forest, or both, for a short period of time. Paratheatrics is an ordeal; not a "holiday," but a "trip" in the same sense of the term as it has been used to refer to LSD or mescaline trips. As a mind-expanding experience, the work tends to focus on the breakdown of social ego, and all its physical manifestations in the body. The goal: to work toward reversing the desensitivisation process that produces the "dead skin" that keeps one away from open contact with life experience. The physical work of the first stage is, of course, one way to return the nervous system to a human perspective on life: "To be as one is" says Grotowski, and also to see life as it is: whole.

Some praise paratheatrics as the ultimate form in workshop-type exploration of human nature. It is through the ordeal-experience and natural human encounter that actors discover who they really are underneath what they know or can do in terms of theatrical skills. However, to many, if one cannot apply the experience to theatre immediately, or at least justify it in theatrical terms, then the workshop has no objective value. Still others simply consider the phenomenon a waste of time and void of theatrical values, stating that it has no use to the actor and, furthermore, that it is dangerous psychologically. Clearly, because this kind of project is so heavily dependent on "raw personal experience" rather than acquiring specific skills, it is open to these kinds of attacks.

There is certainly a factual basis underlying these accusations. It is true that paratheatrics does not function in support of any existing theatrical tradition; it is true that self-exploration and consciousness raising is a painful and dangerous process. It is *not* true, however, that this type of workshop has nothing to do with theatre. Paratheatrics should be seen as a "clinic-workshop" that has as its subject matter the

process of "workshopping"—of working together. It is not about *making* something or *learning* something, but, like any other "clinic" situation, it trouble-shoots below the surface of technical creation in art. In other words, it is about human experience, the basic source of energy and creativity in all art. It is an attempt to explore human values that are often lost in increased concern over production values, style, and technique, or in the administrative problems that plague so many artists and groups today. It is about stripping away, rather than building up—again, Grotowski's "via negativa." Ultimately, the value of paratheatrics is that it holds the potential of bringing life experience back into theatrical form, or of changing existing forms altogether through changing those who make theatre.

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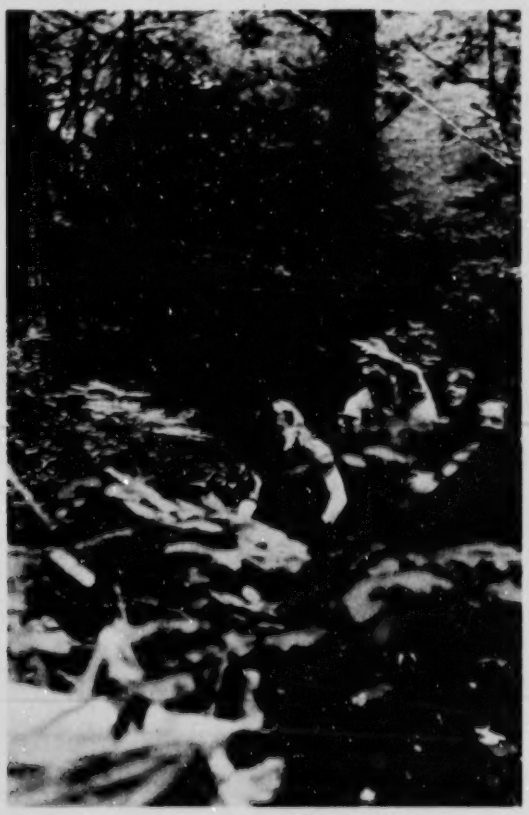

Actor Training

in the Neutral Mask

by Sears A. Eldredge and

Hollis W. Huston

During the first World War, in Paris Jacques Copeau developed the idea of a

severe and simple form of theatre, neither classical nor topical, but versatile through the economy of its means. In 1919 he remodelled the stage of the Vieux-Columbier in accordance with his new ideas, and over the next two years he founded a school for the training of actors, the École du Vieux Columbier. Both in design and in acting, Copeau wanted to make large statements with simple gestures. The pursuit of simplicity made him eliminate distractions, to create the still ground against which a movement or a form could be seen. His bare architectural stage was meant to magnify the evanescent statements of the drama. "I want the stage to be naked and neutral," he wrote, "in order that every delicacy may appear there, in order that every fault may stand out; in order that the dramatic work may have a chance in this neutral atmosphere to fashion that individual garment which it knows how to put on." (In Sergeant, "A New French Theatre," *The New Republic*, 1917.) The simplicity that Copeau sought required a neutral atmosphere.

Copeau built that atmosphere into the theatrical space of the Vieux-Columbier, but to realize it in the spaces and rhythms of the actor's body was another, less tangible problem. The actor would have to be stripped as bare as the stage; only then could he express himself clearly and simply. Otherwise, the movement would be lost against a ground of temperament or convention. To find the neutral atmosphere within himself, therefore, the actor would first have to give up deeply ingrained but superficial habits. "The actor always starts from an artificial *attitude*, a bodily, mental, or vocal *grimace*. His attack is both too deliberated and insufficiently premeditated." ("Notes on the Actor," trans. Harold J. Salemson, *Actors on Acting*, eds. Toby Cole and Helen Krich Chinoy, 1970.) The starting point was to be not an attitude but a silence serving as a resting state, a condition without motion but filled with energy, like the condition of a runner in the moment before his race. All impulses were to arise from that state and return to it. "To start from silence and calm. That is the very first point. An actor must know how to be silent, to listen, to answer, to remain motionless, to start a gesture, follow through with it, come back to motionlessness and silence, with all the shadings and half-tones that these actions imply."

To lead actors into familiarity with a neutral atmosphere in their own bodies, Copeau assigned his students to work with masks. In Copeau's use of the mask to rid the actor of temperamental habits, Etienne Decroux found the germ of his severe and abstractive corporeal mime. Decroux noticed that the mask reveals the personality of the wearer. In commonplace actions as well as dramatic ones, the actor's idiosyncratic way of moving tended to drown the movement itself; under the mask *how* becomes more important than *what*. "So we're relying on masks to fix things up, are we? But it's just the contrary! Masks make things worse. . . . It's like lightning. We see everything you do clearly. And the moment you wear a mask, especially [a neutral] mask, we see the quality of what you're doing." (In Leabhart, "Etienne Decroux on Masks," *Mime Journal*, 1975.) If the mask could reveal the "attitude" or "grimace" that controlled the untrained actor, then it could also amplify and objectify the "neutral atmosphere" when the actor found it. Therefore, the neutral mask became an important tool for Copeau and for a later generation of teachers.

Copeau's school did not survive, but the influence of his mask training has been carried on in two main channels. One of those channels was defined by Michael Saint-Denis, Copeau's nephew; the other, by Jacques Lecoq, who trained under Jean Dasté, Copeau's son-in-law, from 1945 to 1947. Teachers from both traditions have worked in or founded actor training programs in the United States. The Saint-Denis teaching stresses the actor's service to text, and uses only character masks, though some of those are closer to neutrality than others. Lecoq's teaching, on the other hand, is concerned in its initial phase with matters that precede speech and character. Before

wearing character masks, Lecoq's students are made familiar with the *masque neutre*, which is designed to rid them of conditioned attitudes in favor of an economical use of the body. More than any other person, Lecoq has defined the neutral state for the performer, as it is realized in masks.

Neutrality

Jacques Lecoq speaks of the neutral mask as tending toward a "fulcrum point which doesn't exist." As the actor approaches this fixed point, he becomes "a blank sheet of paper, a 'tabla rasa.' " (This and subsequent quotations of Lecoq are taken from notes of an interview by Sears Eldredge, trans. Fay Lacoq, in Eldredge, "Masks: Their Use and Effectiveness in Actor Training Programs," Diss. Michigan State University 1975.) For Bari Rolfe, "the two words, 'appropriate' and 'economical' together almost add up to the term 'neutral.' The student executes any action, like walking, with only the expenditure of energy and rhythm, in space and in time, that the action requires." [T53] Richard Hayes-Marshall speaks of neutrality as "a condition such that, if the actor finds himself there, he doesn't know what he will do next. . . . When you are there, you don't know what it is; if you did, it wouldn't be neutral." Andrew Hepburn writes that "Neutrality means responding to stimuli in a *purely sensory* way."

A neutral organism expends only the energy required by the task at hand. Personalities expend that amount of energy and something else besides; personalities are distinguished from each other by the nature of what they add. *Therefore, to be a personality, to be oneself even, is not to be neutral.* Yet one cannot avoid being oneself. An actor can hope to perform a neutral action, but he cannot be neutral—neutral is a "fulcrum point that doesn't exist." To approach neutral action, one must lose oneself, denying one's own attitudes or intentions. At the moment of neutral action, one does not know what one will do next, because anticipation is a mark of personality; one cannot describe how one feels because introspection intrudes on simplicity; one reacts in a sensory way, because when the mind stops defining experience, the senses still function. Economy demands that both motion and rest be unpremeditated. Neutral activity witholds nothing; it is an energized condition, like the moment of inspiration before speech. The neutrality that the mask seeks is *an economy of mind and body, evidenced at rest, in motion, and in the relationship between them.*

Characteristics of the Masks

The personality of the maskmaker threatens the neutrality of the mask. One must devote many trials and experiments to the research of neutrality. Hayes-Marshall has redesigned his neutral masks seven times. "There is no such thing as a neutral mask," he says, "It has to be designed by somebody."

Neutral masks are at rest; they do not gesture, frown, smile, or grimace. The masks are symmetrical. Though the neutral mask is never used for speaking, the lips are lightly parted, as if the mask were about to speak. The masks are usually designed in pairs,

male and female. Since the male and female bodies have different centers of gravity, the masks that will be carried by them must also differ. The leather mask designed for Lecoq by Sartori is brown, but celastic or papier-maché masks used in other studios are often white. A white mask reflects light well, and therefore shows its expression clearly; brown masks, on the other hand, are closer in appearance to skin tones. Leather is the best material for simulating the textures of living skin, but there are few people capable of making leather masks. Amleto Sartori of Padua reconstructed the craft from Renaissance sources, and made neutral, expressive and *commedia* masks of leather for Lecoq and for Carlo Mazzone-Clementi. His son Donato carries on the work today, but the masks are expensive and slow to produce. Papier-maché or celastic masks are easier and cheaper.

Styles of sculpting vary according to the amount of personality considered proper in the mask. The Sartori mask used by Lecoq, which is dominated by a pair of sharp lines that define the nose and continue upward to form the brow line, seems to some observers rather abstract (Fig. 1). The Hepburn mask (Fig. 2) is softer in outline and more naturalistic: detailed contours in the nose, eyes, cheeks, and brows, give an impression of flesh and muscle. The tragic masks of the Saint-Denis tradition, which are used for some of the same purposes as the neutral mask, are simple and harmonious masks that represent the four ages of man. (Michel Saint-Denis, *Theatre: Rediscovery of Style*, 1969.) At the extreme of abstraction is the metaphysical mask of Mazzone-Clementi (Fig. 3). The metaphysical mask is defined only by a centerline, a browline, and one circular and one triangular eyehole. An abstract mask leads the actor beyond psychology to the intrinsic qualities of movements and body shapes. A personalized mask is less remote from dramatic characterization.

Exercises for the Actor Using the Neutral Mask

Most teachers of the mask believe that training should be a *via negativa:* they will not tell the student what to do, but they will point out mistakes after they have been made. "By blocking the path taken by the actor," writes Rolfe, "you oblige him to look for another. . . . Each restriction placed on the actor forces his imagination to seek ways to get around it." The teacher cannot provide a model or a set of rules. The student must look for the condition of neutrality within himself. Since bodies are unique, each person's neutrality is his own: there is no single pattern. Hayes-Marshall says that "if a student's work creates fire, I'm not interested in saying it's not fire." Yet in the pursuit of neutrality, a lapse into psychology is perceived as an error. To see such lapses, and to train his students to see them, the teacher must have experienced them in himself.

A period of training, often as long as a year, is required before students attempt the mask. The training period is devoted to acrobatics and conditioning, to developing an awareness of the body's articulations and of the images that the body can project into space. The mask then becomes a way of learning the meaning of those articulations and images.

Most teachers introduce the mask with a talk on its design and significance. Then the actor studies the mask: at the École Lecoq, that study lasts for eight days. The moment of putting on the mask is crucial, since the body will immediately begin to accept or reject the mask. The actor may feel the urge to impose a movement or a body image, but he must inhibit that urge, allowing his own thoughts, his breathing, and his

stance, to be replaced by those of the mask. Lecoq does not allow his students to view themselves in a mirror at this point, but some teachers find that the mirror can help a student see the change in his condition. The mask is treated with the respect due to a human face. It is handled by the sides or by top and bottom; one never grabs it by the nose or places the hand over its eyes. There is no speaking in the neutral mask; if the student needs to say something, he must first raise the mask onto the forehead.

Figure 1. Male and female neutral masks designed by Richard Hayes-Marshall, strongly influenced by Sartori masks.

The first exercises begin from sleep, the most fundamental of resting states. The study of neutrality starts with simple activities such as standing, walking, sitting, or picking up an object, as performed in the mask. The first level of error is gratuitous movement. In walking, one student will bounce, another will sway, another will take extra steps after the forward movement has stopped; one will look at the ceiling, another will look at his feet. In standing, one will scratch his head, another will put his hands on hips. One student will take hold of an object several times before lifting it, another as he picks it up will make gestures to show how heavy it is. Such movements are imposed on the action; the student must find a way to do the action without them. By making mistakes, however, a student begins to learn how his habits lead him away from neutrality.

A second level of error has to do with the tempo of movement. The actor may seize an object abruptly, without preparation, or he may wait so long that when he picks up the object, the need to do so is gone. Either error will leave questions in an observer's mind. "Why so fast?" Or "why so slow?" If the question arises, the action is not neutral—an attitude has intruded on the move. ent. There is a moment when the body is ready to move, and if the movement happens at that moment, no question arises.

Figure 2. "Mask of Wonder" (male) designed by Andrew Hepburn.

A third level of error is marked by the imposed attitude. The student performs a single action, but in a manner that creates the image of a character with prior experience of the action. The hands may be so stiff that they seem fearful or hostile. The chest may be sunken, expressing fatigue or cunning, or expanded, showing curiosity. The student must examine his customary self-use, because neutral action is performed as if for the first time. No one part of the body, nor the mask itself, can draw attention; in

neutrality, the entire body and the surrounding space are perceived with equal weight. To focus on a part of the space—to expand the chest, for instance—is to be dramatic and not neutral.

The initial exercises introduce the student to a process of experiment, perception, and change. Each error brings discovery of a new approach to the task. The new approach is questioned, in its turn, bringing the student closer to a condition that he can

Figure 3. Carlo Mazzone-Clementi's metaphysical mask.

fully achieve only for brief moments. The research of neutrality never ends, for every level of knowledge, if accepted rather than questioned, becomes a technique imposed on the mask. The advantage for the performer is that each new technique is stronger than the old, because it is closer to the body's natural functioning.

After exploring simple actions in the mask, the teacher may assign extended scenarios, in which the person wearing the mask encounters elements or objects. Some

of the common exercises are: 1) The figure wakes and moves toward light. 2) The figure wakes in the desert and walks into a city. 3) The figure wakes in the desert; goes to a river and enters it, perceiving its flow and its source; finds a tree, from which a bird flies. 4) The figure encounters another figure, of the opposite sex (man meets woman). 5) The figure wakes and stands in a fog; explores the fog; finds himself at the edge of the sea, as the fog clears; throws a stone out to sea. 6) The figure walks along a beach; goes to the end of a pier; sees a boat moving across the water, and waves to a person in the boat. 7) The figure walks to the end of the pier and pulls in a sailboat; punts the boat away from the shore, raises sail, and rests at the tiller; lowers sail and throws out the anchor; casts a net and pulls it in full of fish; lifts the anchor, raises sail, and rests at the tiller.

The teacher looks for simplicity and clarity in the actor's imagery. Lecoq has said that "If the Neutral Mask looks at the sea, it becomes the sea." Does the actor accept the environment, or does he establish a dramatic conflict with it? Does he show us the sea, or his own impression of the sea? Are the imaginary objects established in their weight and texture as well as in their shape? Is each experience —touching the earth, entering the river, casting the net—finished before another is begun? Does the actor show awareness of another person, or is he only compelled in a social way to look at him? Does he show awareness of objects and elements, or is he only compelled in an intellectual way to touch them? Is his breathing quiet and regular, or jagged and dramatic? Does the stone continue its flight after it leaves the actor's hand? "How can I discover without curiosity?" protests the student, and in asking the question, he defines the assignment.

In the exercise called "Discovery," the actor carrying the mask assumes a position of sleep, while the teacher places around him objects of various shapes, weights, and textures. The assignment is to wake up, to explore several of the objects as if one had no experience of them, and to return to sleep. Familiar objects are treacherous; it is tempting to hold a knife by the handle, to pick up a book and read the print, to open an umbrella, to bounce a ball, but these familiar actions may assume a history of interaction with the object. The neutral mask might discover the working of the umbrella, but only as the result of an exploration; and that discovery, if it comes, has no psychological or intellectual purpose. The mask does not impose a concept on the environment, but accepts the experiences contained within the environment.

Not all neutrality exercises cast the actor as a human figure. Rolfe asks her students to identify with animals in the neutral mask; or to recreate the images of a *haiku*. Hayes-Marshall gives assignments in the elements: earth, air, fire, and water. By asking the student to carry the mask in a nonhuman image, the teacher extends the student's ability to enter a condition without imposing personal associations on it.

Benefits of the Training for the Actor

The neutral mask is a way of understanding performance, not a way of performing. The mask is a tool for analyzing the quality of the body's action. The mask hides the face, but reveals the attitudes and intentions, the nuances, the feeling tones, that are otherwise only dimly sensed in a person's motion or stillness. When he carries it, the actor must communicate through his whole person; and the spectator must perceive the

expression of the whole person. The experience can be frightening, because it is like being, or perceiving, a second person within the familiar body. Because the neutral mask is empty to begin with, it fills with whatever expression is perceived in the body. Hayes-Marshall says that "a good neutral mask looks like the person who puts it on." Trained observers know the expression of the face before the student takes off the mask. The mask draws attention to the body's points of resistance, and demands, as the price of comfort, that the body be integrated in a single image. Carrying the mask is internal and external, analytic and holistic. The dichotomies of physical and emotional

Figure 4. Clay mold by Huston for a male neutral mask.

technique are united in a single experience. The neutral mask allows the quality of a movement to be seen; it takes that quality on itself and magnifies it.

Because it requires participation in an image different from oneself, the mask attacks mumble-and-scratch naturalism. Peter Frisch has described the kind of actor who says, "Oh, I know that character, that character is just like me," when the truth is

that "the character is nothing like they are. They see it through their own neurotic self-image." The neutral mask can lead an actor to reject his habitual identifications in favor of a deeper, simpler understanding of his powers of expression.

The neutral mask teaches simplicity in stillness and in activity. When an actor throws a stone, each part of his body should throw the stone, and no part should do anything else. The action should be allowed to complete itself before it is terminated, and it should terminate either in stillness or in the incipience of the next action. Bad movement training confuses activity with commitment; in the hands of a good teacher, the mask shows us that many details of our movement are parasitic behaviors, caused by resistance to the task at hand. When the actor clears himself of habitual assumptions and attitudes, he becomes a finely tuned instrument, capable of recording the subtle phases of perception and intention. An actor who is comfortable in stillness and activity, who commits to both, and who moves easily from one state to the other, is an actor who commands the stage. The neutral mask provides a way for a teacher and student momentarily to grasp and hold on to the intangible quality called "presence."

The actor cannot be neutral; he can only hope to attain moments of neutral action. Yet the pursuit of neutrality purifies him, making his very errors more commanding. Shedding personal clichés and habitual responses, he looks deeper into himself for images that are truly his own. After experiencing the neutral mask, he moves on to expressive masks, to the speaking masks of *commedia*, and finally to the clown nose and the discovery of his personal clown. Beneath these masks, however, is the state of near-neutrality: in a sense, the actor wears the neutral mask beneath every other mask and every other character. Lecoq likens the neutral masks to "the bottom of the sea," whereas "the Expressive Mask is like waves."

The neutral mask is not a way of performing; there is no neutral "style" of acting. The mask helps to identify a resting state for the actor, a condition of presence from which all things are possible, and to which all actions return at completion.

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Training at the

Waseda Little Theatre:

the Suzuki Method

By James R. Brandon

During the past dozen years or so a number of contemporary theatre groups in

Tokyo have been exploring, each in their own way, new and intensely theatrical approaches in the actor's art. Each group bases its work on ensemble playing, so that in the midst of the exploration, some consistency of performance style has seemed desirable. In either formal or informal ways, this usually means an actor training system created out of the group and designed for its own needs. A training system that is especially Japanese is the one developed by Tadashi Suzuki with members of the acting company of the Waseda Little Theatre (*Waseda Shogekijo* see T60, T65).

Suzuki formed the Waseda Little Theatre in 1965. Among the twenty members of the acting company today, seven are part of that original group. They gather four nights a week, after working at other jobs, to train under Suzuki's direction. Suzuki, with the actors, has created a series of training disciplines, combining voice and body, which, while being flexible and capable of variation, are precise in their structure. At each session an hour is devoted to performing the disciplines, some of which are performed at each session, so that actors may execute them as many as 200 times a year, and some once a week or less. New disciplines are created as needed. They are extremely demanding physically and mentally.

I was drawn to Suzuki's disciplines because they are unique, as far as I know, in that they are based for the most part on *Kabuki* acting techniques and also on *No*. Perhaps because I come to Japanese modern theatre from long involvement with traditional Asian theatre, I was immediately impressed by what Suzuki was doing. Here was a serious, concerted, and carefully thought out attempt to bridge the awful gap between traditional and modern theatre in Japan that is the despair of so many performers. In the winter of 1976 I spent five weeks in Japan looking into contemporary training systems. I attended some fifteen training sessions of the Waseda Little Theatre and participated in disciplines most of that time (the only discipline I am describing that I did not perform was # 10). I interviewed Suzuki as well. What I observed and experienced certainly is not the whole story, but the training which Suzuki directs, with near fanatical intensity, is sufficiently structured that a description of these disciplines and the atmosphere surrounding their execution will give a fairly accurate picture of the system overall. What follows is a subjective report, mingling descriptions of eleven disciplines, with my observations, and portions of interviews with Suzuki.

Performers arrive at the tiny 30 foot-by-40 foot theatre about 6:00 p.m. to dress—leotards, shorts, T-shirts, sweaters in the winter, kimonos, anything at all—and do individual warm-ups. As 6:30 approaches, Suzuki sits alone or paces at the rear of that half of the theatre space given over to the audience (the other half is the postage-stamp stage). He is a strong-looking man with an intense expression. He wears, invariably, the loose blue jacket and divided skirt, *hakama*, of a *kendo* uniform. He carries a wood fencing sword. The performers kneel expectantly near the stage. Suddenly he shouts, "The stamping discipline! Everyone!" The performers leap onto the stage and stand without a sound, ready to move. For the next hour, until around 7:30, Suzuki will command the succession of disciplines. The system is very Japanese. No one speaks a word except Suzuki. No one asks a question. No one makes a suggestion. The acknowledged star of the group, Kayoko Shiraishi, an actress of terrifying force on stage, is indistinguishable among the other performers. There is an electric alertness, a quiet tension, in the room. They accept shouted criticism, slaps on the head, calls of "damned fool" *(baka yaro)*. Suzuki is their teacher, their *sensei*. In this respect the Waseda Little Theatre is following attitudes toward learning a "way" *(do)* and the strict master-pupil

relationship that are typical of traditional arts of all kinds in Japan. (It should be added that after the disciplines are over this hierarchical relationship is set aside and Suzuki is warm and informal.)

Discipline # 1. Stamping. All twenty performers stand in a circle onstage. The torso is held upright, straight, firmed into a solid block. Suzuki corrects any posture that is loose, twisted, or slack. Arms are held down or arched away from the sides, the fingers curved into a light fist. Knees are turned out and sharply bent into a trapezoidal, or "box," position. The posture is from *kabuki*, but more extreme. An assistant plays a tape of "Shinnai Banashi," a popularized version of a *kabuki* melody that has a driving beat. Knees deeply flexed, actors circle the stage, stamping in time to the music. Flat feet strike directly under the center of the body. There is fierce concentration. Every part of the body is held motionless except pile-driver legs and feet. The sound is deafening. We are on the second floor of this tiny building and with each rhythmic foot stamp, the whole structure bounces. (I think of the story of the bridge collapsing when a column of soldiers marches in step across it. I hope it's apocryphal.) The music lasts three minutes. Silence. Actors freeze, then collapse to the floor in heaps. "Fall like a puppet with the string cut," bellows Suzuki. Flute music sneaks in. "Rise in a single movement. Don't jerk. Let the music move you." They (we) try. With heaving chests from the previous exercise and with limbs sprawled so there is no good point of leverage under the body, it requires concentration, strength, ingenuity to rise, turn, and move to the front of the stage as it in a single movement. This discipline is done nightly, usually as the first. Rarely is Suzuki satisfied. Some actors have been doing it for four years, yet Suzuki detects the unwanted slack body, the broken movement in all of us. It is deceptively simple but the discipline demands a constant energy level. Loss of concentration shows instantly.

You have said you formed the Waseda Little Theatre thirteen years ago. Did you have a training system right from the beginning?

No. Our productions were terrible. I decided we had to have a training system. We began working out the disciplines in 1972.

Why do you call the movement and vocal exercises "disciplines" (kunren)?

It's important that the actors think of them as acting disciplines. They are not just exercises *(undo)* or physical conditioning *(taiso)*. (Laughing.) Some call my training the "Suzuki Method." [A joke about the "Suzuki Method" for teaching children to play the violin.] We are doing basic disciplines now. We have four new actresses. They've been with us about a year so they're just learning.

Discipline # 2. Side Step. Suzuki orders half the group onstage. While facing front, the knees are bent into the standard box leg position. Suzuki thumps the floor with the hilt of his sword and counts the movement sequence. "One!" Cock the right foot upward and stamp out to the side shifting the weight onto the right leg. "Two!" Slide the left foot in to restore the original standing posture. "Three!" Bend the knees until the buttocks rest on the heels, weight on the toes. "Four!" Rise to the standard posture. Repeat on the

left side. "The torso must be absolutely perpendicular. Don't bend when you move," Suzuki tells us. Kicking out and stamping is based on the *mie* pose of *Kabuki*. The discipline continues. The sideways force of twenty stamping feet makes the building sway. It is impossible to imagine that a coffee shop is below us, open for business. But there is. Suzuki counts irregularly. "Don't develop a rhythm. Be ready whenever the count comes. Sing!" It is the count of three. We are squatting on our heels. In unison the group sings "Nagasaki Blues," a raucous popular song, flat out, maximum volume, no nuances, no vibrato, exact diction. The sound is overwhelming. Suzuki gestures to rise, very slowly, as the singing continues. Legs gradually straighten during the remaining two minutes of the song. It is hard to do. Suzuki continues counting, the discipline goes on. Legs begin to tremble. Movements are getting ragged. An actress lets a flicker of pain cross her face, as she holds the one count while singing, all of her weight over one deeply bent leg. "Enough. Next group," commands Suzuki. The second half of the company goes on stage and the discipline resumes.

It is easy to see the Kabuki *movements in the disciplines I've observed and been in. Why did you happen to turn to traditional theatre techniques? Had you studied* Kabuki *or no? Did you perform them?*

Oh, no. At school I did a B.A. in economics. I had nothing to do with the famous Waseda University Theatre Department. I went to performances though and watched what the actors did. And I read a great deal about *Kabuki*, books by actors like Mitsugoro Bando and by scholars, Masakatsu Gunji and others.

The bent knees, the stamping, the solid torso are certainly familiar from Kabuki.

Others are from *No*. But most are from *Kabuki*. Young people can relate to *Kabuki* easier than to *No*, which is so old. We don't copy forms *(kata)* just as they are. We aren't learning to perform *Kabuki*. It's the feeling of the particular form that I try to teach, so the actor can revitalize that marvelous physicality that comes from *No* and from *Kabuki*.

Discipline # 3. Walking. The whole company circles the stage, moving in unison to "Shinnai Banashi." The music has five sections; a different walk goes with each. First, the sliding step. Knees are held together, toes pointed in female style, with feet overlapping. While the knees are held tightly together the foot slides flat on the floor. It is a combination of the *No* sliding step *(suri ashi)* and the *Kabuki* female walk.

Second, walking on the outside of the feet. Knees are bent sharply outward and the foot is held perpendicular to the line of the lower leg. A leg is cocked high and then stamped directly under the body, weight on the outside of the foot (reminiscent of *kathakali* foot position).

Third, walking on the inside of the foot. Feet are splayed out, with the knees in. The foot kicks out sideways and is then brought down hard on the floor with an inward sweeping motion. It is an awkward, difficult movement. Hips have a tendency to gyrate and the torso tries to balance the kick with a compensatory movement to the other side. Suzuki shouts "terrible" at us in general. Apparently he is too disgusted to make specific corrections. He lets us go on.

Four, walking on tiptoe. Arms held straight at the sides, rise as high as possible on the toes. The body is as nearly like a stick as possible. The steps are tiny. "Glide," Suzuki calls out, "Float. Like a string is attached to your belly button. Don't bounce! Only the ankles and knees move! Straight! Look straight ahead! No up and down movement! Float! Float!" Suzuki isn't criticizing. He's exhorting us, supporting us, for this is an easy walk and we are doing pretty well.

During the fifth music segment, each actor walks according to a mood or character he chooses. "Be extreme! Do something!" he encourages. One actor walks one-legged, one lurches in spastic pain, one minces, one clomps ponderously, one hitches himself along sideways, one stretches a step over four measures of music, one changes character (and walk) every four beats.

Discipline #4. Basic body posture. Suzuki considers posture fundamental (as does every *No* or *Kabuki* performer). He lectures the group on this point several times a week. They are not bored. They accept the necessity of it and attend as if it was for the first time. The two basic postures used in the disciplines are: pelvis thrust out behind *(koshi o dasu)* and pelvis tucked forward *(koshi o ireru)*. In the walking and stamping disciplines the actor chooses one or the other, it doesn't matter which.

The first, Suzuki says, is taken from *No*. It lifts the chest forward and gives a feeling of inquisitiveness, even aggression, but it is the harder of the two to move from. Lying face down on the floor, push the pelvis sharply up, without moving any other part of the body, for *koshi o dasu*. Or, standing, bend forward at the hips until the torso is parallel with the floor, then raise the head and torso while keeping the hips immobile.

The second, it taken from *kabuki*. At first it seems unnatural, but once the body gets used to it, it allows for fluid yet powerful movement. When the pelvis is tucked forward several things happen. The spine becomes straight (through habit our spines usually curve backward just above the pelvis). The weight of the body centers directly over the hips. The lower abdomen and hips become a stable platform, a fulcrum for movement. Legs move easily, and weight can be shifted rapidly forward, backward, or to the side. This posture deemphasizes the chest, giving the whole body a prepared but retiring, defensive look. To find the *koshi o ireru* posture, lie face down, press the pelvis into the floor or, standing, bend the knees slightly while tilting the pelvis forward, keeping care not to push the spine itself forward.

Can you describe what qualities No *and* Kabuki*-derived disciplines bring out in members of the company?*

Through the disciplines I want to arouse the unconscious "Japaneseness" of their acting. But I have to go into some background to explain. The development of European and Japanese theatre are absolutely different. Each Japanese theatre form—*Kabuki, No, Shimpa*, the puppet theatre, *Shingeki*—has its territory that others don't invade. Each has its repertory and acting style. They don't mingle. This tendence is much less pronounced in Europe. You don't have "one way" to produce Shakespeare, but we have "one way" to act a *No* play or a Chikamatsu play. If you ask why, my answer is that in Europe the playscript evolved as a kind of literature, that would appear in printed form. So the art of acting came to be the realizing, in plastic

terms on stage, of an already existing script. Theatre in Japan originated in the single performer's skill or art *(hitori gei)*—juggler, singer, dancer, actor. As time went by, words necessary to create a play were added to this existing performing art. So the actor and his physical presence are basic to acting in a "Japanese" manner. That is true of modern as well as traditional theatre.

But this understanding of Japanese acting was abandoned by the people in *shingeki* after the Meiji period. Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekhov, and, of course, Stanislavsky, became our gods. So for seventy years our modern drama has had a complete break with traditional theatre. The world of the *Shingeki* stage is terribly narrow, and it doesn't express Japanese ideas, or feelings, or attitudes. The actors don't know how. And *Kabuki* and *No* can't express modern ways of thinking. My aim—well, I suppose it's my hope—is to bring the two together. There must be some method to make traditional consciousness compatable with modern habits.

Concretely what do you mean by traditional Japanese consciousness?

The consciousness of the physical body as the source of Japanese theatre. Even our verbal expression is linked, complete I think, to our bodily sense. *Shingeki* actors have terrible voices, because they have no bodily sense. The production of Tsuruya Namboku's great *Kabuki* play *The Scarlet Princess of Edo*, [at Kinokuniya Hall, Tokyo, February, 1976] that *Shingeki* actors just did was ridiculous. Of course they moved terribly, but their voices were even worse. When they show a strong emotion, they can't do anything except scream. They aren't trained to do anything strong. Until modern actors have consciousness of their bodies, we can never have expressive speech onstage. Of course, *No* and *Kabuki* have it, but *No* actors know only *No* and *Kabuki* actors know only *Kabuki*.

Discipline #5. One-leg stand. The participants stand on their right legs, with knees sharply bent. The left foot is raised off the floor as high as possible (crotch or waist level) and kept close to the body. The torso is straight. We hold without waivering for, five, ten, twenty seconds. Suzuki strikes a bench with his sword. We stamp straight down with the left foot and raise the right. Freeze. Stamp and hold. Stamp and hold. Suzuki's rhythm, as in similar disciplines, is irregular. You do not know when the command will come. You have to be ready for it constantly. The feeling of concentration is great. "Don't bounce! Keep your head level all the time. Drive the foot down to meet the ground," Suzuki shouts. I find that I want to push up slightly from the planted foot so the body's weight will be suspended momentarily while the other foot goes down to meet the floor. That is the easy way, the natural way. And that is what Suzuki does not want. Feet should be independent of the torso. They should be free to move while the torso is stable. It is hard, but it is very clear what Suzuki expects our bodies to do.

Are there specific kinds of physical development that you aim for through the disciplines?

Yes. Because most Japanese today are office workers, their bodies are flabby, especially hips and thighs. We have many disciplines with bent knees, stamping, dropping into a squat, and so on to build these muscles.

Because people don't live in traditional matted rooms any longer?

Before modern times, Japanese sat on *tatami*, so they had constant exercise from kneeling and rising. Now people sit in chairs. (He shrugs.) Young actors can't project a strong scene because their bodies haven't any strength. The feet are especially important.

You mean different walking movements?

All movements of the feet. The actor has to have solid foot work before action can spring from the body with power. Our actors must control their movement through space onstage absolutely. Walking across the stage for the Western actor may be just walking, but I insist on a special keenness in our walking discipline, precise control, continuity. No twisting, no uncontrolled vertical movement.

Then you aim at control as well as strength?

All disciplines develop strength. And they teach the actor to be conscious of the body, which is the prerequisite to adequately projecting a physical image on stage. Control is part of the actor's body consciousness.

Discipline # 6. Squatting. The group members start in a standing position, legs in the box position. Slowly we squat until the buttocks are on the heels. Weight is balanced on the toes. We return to a standing position. We declaim in unison a chorus speech from *The Trojan Women*. Then we declaim while moving from standing to squatting, or vice versa, continuing the movement, up or down, as long as the speech lasts. Suzuki shouts at us to speak louder. Our phrases are not in unison. "Again!" he shouts. "Again!" The slow rising and squatting is torture for the thighs. Suzuki is forcing us to disassociate from the muscle pain in order to maintain the unison vocal pattern. I know I am not the only one hurting, for several performers stop moving and just stand as they declaim.

Discipline # 7. Kneeling. The actors kneel with legs wide apart, placing hands on the floor in front of the knees. We look straight at the audience, and recite in unison *The Trojan Women* speech. The speech is always given the same way: precise diction, breath phrases exactly placed, vocal phrases are delivered in a rapid and regular rhythm without emphasizing some syllables more than others. This is one of the easy physical disciplines, but the unison speech is exhausting. The kneeling position and the rapid delivery *(ippon choshi)* are taken from well-known *Kabuki* acting techniques.

I notice that there isn't any solo work. What effect does it have on the actor to perform all disciplines as a member of the group?

It's intentional. In my theory, no actor can expect to progress in individual self-expression until he has mastered, together with the other members of the acting company, common patterns of move-

ment and voice. There are some exceptions. Rising to the flute music is not done in unison nor is the last segment of the walking discipline. But the whole basis of the disciplines' effectiveness is doing them as a group.

Discipline # 8. Backbend. Actors pair up. One sits cross-legged on the floor while the other stands with one foot on each thigh. The first bends back until head and back lie flat on the floor. "Sing!" commands Suzuki. We sing "Nagasaki Blues." Suzuki thumps the floor with the sword. "Up!" We sit up, first tucking head against chest, then uncurling the body. "Again!" This time we sing after we rise to a sitting position. We do this two, three times. Some of us have to stop, or hold our bodies partly up in the air, or do the sit-ups with the help of our hands. We change places. Standing on a person's thighs is scarcely simpler (though not as painful). It is difficult to maintain a sense of balance, feeling straining muscles under your feet. You know how difficult it is for your partner, so you try to be gentle. You don't let your toes dig in for balance. You struggle to stand flat footed, while Suzuki admonishes, "Dont' move! Don't wiggle!" This is an excruciating discipline that most approaches with respect and trepidation.

Discipline # 9. Duck walk. The actors drop into a squat, with buttocks resting on the heels (as in # 6). We look straight ahead and reach forward with the arms out, palms up. Then we duckwalk the width of the stage four times. Half the group is on stage at one time. "You're bobbing!," Suzuki harangues us. "Don't just move! Imagine you're attacking an enemy! Your arms are lances! Run the enemy through!" Only a handful of the company does well. Thighs won't maintain control. We lurch and weave, particularly on the fourth crossing. Suzuki is disappointed. He lectures, "Show your body to the audience. Your legs get weak and so you slow down? You are acting! You can't slow down. You are on your way to kill someone. Present yourself! Act!" Suzuki makes comments like this several times. I ask him what he means.

Any time an actor thinks he is merely exercising or training his muscles, he is cheating himself. These are *acting* disciplines. Every instant of every discipline, the actor must be expressing the emotion of some situation, according to his own bodily interpretation. That's why I don't call them exercises *(undo)* or physical fitness teachers don't go on the stage. We do. I know muscles hurt, the chest heaves during disciplines. It doesn't matter. You have to act even so.

That raises a question. There is a correct and an incorrect way to do a mie in Kabuki. *Correct form is important in traditional theatre. Do your disciplines have a "correct" way of being performed?*

It's not whether the outer form is right or wrong. Does the outer form express the emotion or feeling? And does it do so fully, with power?

You often tell an actor he isn't doing a discipline properly. You scold us.

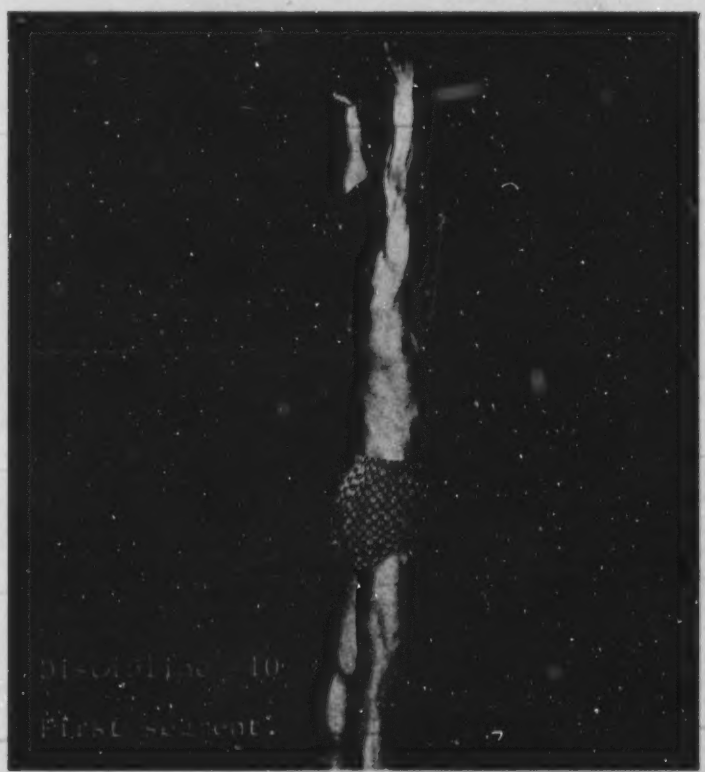
(Laughing.) I do. When it is wrong for that actor. Actors' bodies are all different and the motion one person finds in a discipline will be

different from the emotion another finds. So you can't say one form is right. I ask: is the bodily movement right for that actor's body and for the emotion he wants to express? The problem isn't one of form vs. emotion. Most actors haven't sufficient bodily or vocal control to do *anything*. That's what the disciplines are for, to give him strength and control he can use as he wants.

The Western ballet dancer is judged for the beauty or grace of movement. The No *and* Kabuki *actor too. Where does beauty fit into the Suzuki Method?***

There may be beauty in our productions, but it isn't an aim. I suppose beauty could be created through the control which an actor, working our way, exerts on his voice and body—or it could seem grotesque. I'm not really concerned with beauty. Faced with a demanding role, most young actors in Japan act with a tense *(kincho)* body; we try to act the powerful role through concentration *(shuchu)*.

Discipline #10. The metal ladder. This is the only discipline that I observed where only two actors work at a time. The two actors face each other onstage, each holding overhead a heavy ladder made of iron pipe. They crouch, lift the right leg, and balance.

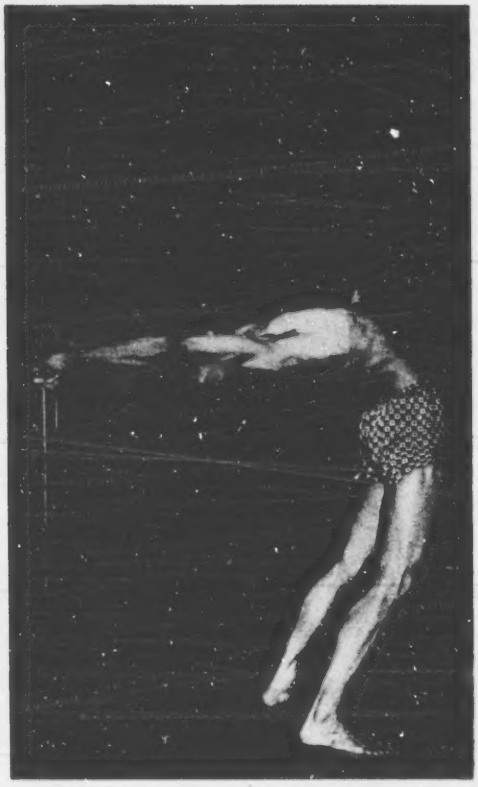


Discipline #10

Second segment.

This is the same posture as the one-leg stand (discipline #5). They step forward together, lift the other leg, and balance again. They take four steps; by the third they have passed out of each other's line of sight. There is no counting out loud or other overt cues for the stepping sequence. Timing the steps depends upon sensitivity to the muscular readiness of the partner, to clues from the breathing pattern, and the like. Physically, it is difficult to balance on one foot without wobbling or to stamp without bouncing while carrying a ladder that weighs perhaps thirty pounds. Clearly this is a special discipline. Everyone watches intently. In case help is needed, two other actors stand by onstage. Suzuki's attitude, too, is different. His comments are quiet and sparing. He doesn't criticize. Two by two all members of the acting company, even the smallest girls, do the discipline. To some, Suzuki says quietly, "Please. Be careful." A thin actor takes a full minute in mental preparation before lifting the ladder. No one is satisfied. No one carries out the discipline with total control.

The strongest men, no more than three or four a night, add a final sequence after the walk: they lower the back of the ladder to the stage by arching into a backbend. After



Discipline #10

Third segment.

a ten seconds rest, they then release the ladder (into the hands of the watching assistant) and straighten up into a standing position, or lift the ladder back up to its original horizontal position overhead. The physical strain of the last sequence is gut-wrenching. One actor tries it and is successful. Two more try: one drops the ladder back, the other loses his balance and is helped. Suzuki ends the discipline.

> Hesitation, jerkiness, or adjusting the position of the body after moving are the result of lack of control. Even a slow or complicated action should be executed so that it appears to be a single motion.
>
> *Are you testing the limits of the actor's physical strength in the ladder discipline? Because control is certainly difficult for most of the company to maintain.*
>
> Of course it builds strength. But more, it demands suppleness and good breath control. It teaches holding the hips in *(koshi o ireru)* because that is the only way the body can arch backward holding that much weight. Lifting the heavy ladder teaches mental concentration.

And the actors know it is dangerous and that they must prepare themselves for it. It teaches them to value and protect their bodies. You gain confidence when you function at an extreme level.

Not only in the ladder discipline, but in almost all I have a sense of great tension.

Well, it may seem like that. Suppression is fundamental to traditional Japanese theatre. What do I mean? Expression in Japanese theatre isn't natural or real. There is nothing natural about a *mie* or the leaping *roppo* exit in *Kabuki*. They are extremely unnatural. So there is this almost unbearable tension in the actor, because he is using unnatural movements and voice to express natural emotions. That is what gives *Kabuki* acting its uniquely weird effect. The *Kabuki* actor engulfs the spectator in his overwhelmingly dynamic stage image. The secret of this kind of acting is instantaneous release of suppressed action, then suppression (that is, nonaction), release again, and so on. The *kabuki* actor begins training his body for this from the age of five or six. That's what I am trying to do in a shorter time with contemporary actors. I suppose you call it tension, but it is not muscular tension. It is psychological tension.

Discipline #11. The subscription list. Sessions often end with this discipline. The actions are based, very loosely, on the exit *(roppo)* movements used by the priest hero, Benkei, in the *Kabuki* dance play, *The Subscription List*. It contains four movement segments, performed in time to a popular music version of the *Kabuki* music for the play. In the first segment, actors lift right leg high in front of the body (waist high if possible). We contract our bodies and hold. On the next measure of music, we stamp hard with the right leg and lift the left leg. This is continued 24 times.

In the second segment, the foot movements are continued and *roppo* arm gestures are added: one arm is extended front and one is cocked behind the ear. The fingers are splayed wide to express energy. This is continued 24 times.

In the third segment, raise the right leg is raised as before, and the arms are raised into a fox *(kitsune)* gesture: one arm is extended front and one is cocked by the ear. Arms are curved and fists dangle from limp wrists. We shout "ha" and hold. On the next measure of music, we drop the foot and arms and relax completely as we exhale to the sound *"tsu"*. This is continued 22 times.

In the fourth segment, we stamp and hop forward with the right foot, left foot cocked up behind the body as the arms snap up into a *roppo* position. We hold. On the next measure, we repeat with the other foot. This is continued for 28 counts. Everyone likes to do the *roppo*. This is a favorite discipline of the performers (which cannot be said for the backbend and the ladder).

This is our most complicated discipline. It's a good one. It demands coordination of rapid arm and leg movements. It alternates tension and relaxation. It is good for balance and rhythm. It's very *Kabuki*-like. Sometimes I stop the music at the end of a segment, we drop into a squat, and sing or speak in unison. It's demanding but good training to sing or declaim while very much out of breath.

Discipline #11

First segment.

Second segment.

These movements, in fact most of them, are in the Kabuki *bravura* (aragoto) *style. It makes me wonder if it prepares the actor to perform comedy as well as serious plays.*

We haven't done a comedy yet. But we don't act a play using the disciplines.

I notice, though, none of the disciplines could be called soft, except perhaps rising to the flute music.

Probably we should have some soft ones. We could.

Do you like the way Kabuki *is acted nowadays, by the way?*

It's commercially successful, as a kind of curiosity. Few people appreciate it as art or drama, though. In the past hundred years *Kabuki* narrowed its performing range, and now specializes in dance and musicalized plays. Even *Kabuki* actors today don't know how to perform the rough language in *The Scarlet Princess of Edo*. That's why the play wasn't done in *Kabuki* for more than a hundred and fifty years.

Discipline #11

Third segment.

Yet, I admit we have learned from *Kabuki* the joy of the body speaking onstage. I don't mean "body language," as you say in English, where the body unconsciously reveals inner emotion. I mean the opposite: the actor deliberately speaks through proportion, line, movement, form of his body. The body creates a picture. To a Japanese, a *mie* or *roppo* speak as clearly as words. From *Kabuki* we also learn that it is more important that the actor discover the possibilities of his body and to express that, than it is to interpret dialog through character. Above all, kabuki shows how the actor must enjoy the play *(asobi)* of the body.

You must mean something special by "play." It is hard to imagine a more serious performing group than yours.

Japanese *asobi* has the same double meaning the English world "play" has. It can mean fun, playing around. And it can mean open, free, creative exploration. Children naturally "play" to learn. Our disciplines are a form of "play" in which we explore the body's possibilities for stage expression. Yes, it is serious play.

The Waseda Little Theatre does not perform much. Some Japanese critics are made uncomfortable by its extreme acting style. Audiences are not large. Their theatre, where I participated in the discipline sessions, seated about fifty people. As of this writing, it has been torn down and the troupe now has no regular theatre. They give a single performance each summer, following two months of intensive training at their new mountain house in Toyama Province. Yet their work is influential in Japan and abroad.

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Abstract Spaces: A Workshop Approach

by David Cole

I am going to describe a workshop technique that makes the abstractions of

conceptual thought available as physical experiences, and in so doing, makes abstraction itself—usually thought of as a danger to theatre work—available to theatre, both as a subject matter and as an untapped source of performance energies.

There is a tendency, in most branches of contemporary thought, to use metaphors of space for all sorts of concepts and relationships that are not in themselves spatial. Literary critics locate the nuances of a word in "semantic space." Psychiatrists refer to the "therapeutic space" in which they encounter their patients. Anthropologists imagine networks of kin-relationships spread out in "social space." Musicologists speak of a "harmonic space" within which tones and timbres are distributed.

What if—as a way of putting abstract thought-processes back in touch with the life of the body—these metaphorical "spaces" were identified with stretches of *actual* space, and the resulting physical areas were then treated as *playing*-areas which an actor might seek to enter, move through and function in? This was the experiment which I and some fifteen others undertook in a special acting workshop at the Baltimore New Theatre Festival in June, 1978.

It is in the area of personal, emotional problems that the incentive to spatialize is strongest. What else accounts for the perennial popularity of quest and journey stories, from *Gilgamesh* to *The Hobbit*? The protagonists of such tales move across a menacing landscape of dark forests, narrow gorges, etc. But there is always at least a *possible* way of "getting through" a gorge or forest; the same cannot be said of the sorts of life-crises for which this terrain clearly stands. As in intellectual discourse, so in narrative: space is a promise of advance, progress, *movement*. We do not so much pity Dorothy for the terrors that lie along the Yellow Brick Road as envy the way she gets her path through suffering neatly marked out in yellow brick. Most of us are not handed our emotional dilemmas in the convenient form of a space to cross.

But suppose we were? This was the possibility explored in a preliminary exercise of the Baltimore workshop. The actors were asked to recall an interval in their lives when they felt they had "no next *move*," "no clear sense of *direction*," "nowhere to *turn*"; to imagine this period as a highly specific kind of space; and then to identify this imagined space with the stretch of rehearsal-room floor now lying at their feet. The objective was to find a way through, and on out of, the space: that is, to discover "moves," "turns" and "directions" that had not been apparent at the time, but could be "glimpsed" with the difficult "interval" now there before one in the form of a space.

This exercise gives in essence the basic method of the workshop: to take some spatial metaphor for an intellectual or emotional situation literally, by laying it out as an actual space, a playing-area; and then to fulfill the secret wish reflected in the metaphor—that all our experience might have the character of bodily movement in space—by moving bodily into that playing-area.

If such an approach can be fruitful—and the Baltimore sessions suggest that it can—this is because, for all its surface novelty, it reposes on some very basic facts of experience:

> *—There is an inherent human tendency to project nonspatial concepts and relationships onto space.*
> *—This tendency is at work in—in fact provides the whole basis for—the theatrical process itself, and especially for the evolution of stage space in the twentieth-century theatre.*

An inclination to represent nonspatial concepts and relations by spatial arrangements can be observed wherever man has set his hand to space. The layout of the tribal village (or, for that matter, the modern city) provides a map of its social divisions.

Cathedrals and mosques diagram, in their groundplans, the cosmological principles proclaimed within. A sports field is a spatial model of a society's image of itself as competitive "arena." A battle front allows the "rift" between societies to take shape in space as an actual disputed "line." We lay out our vision of art history in the gallery-sequence of our museums, and our conception of intellectual order in the stack-arrangements of our libraries. And by the choice and disposition we make of our living space, each of us gives expression to his or her body-image, sexual nature and personality type.

Now my point is not that, through the method I am proposing, theatre might join the ranks of these spatializing activities. My point is that this is the class of activities to which theatre already and inevitably belongs. Theatrical production is, in its essence, a process of making mental constructs (scripts, improv premises, stories, etc.) happen as events in space; and each of the resources it employs to this end—gesture, blocking, setting, light, etc.—functions by translating imaginative relationships into spatial relations. Theatre work makes it possible for us to *enter physically* mental structures which otherwise would exist for us only on the level of thought and fantasy. In other words, theatre accomplishes *by its very nature* the transformation of abstract structure into spatial experience which—as the spatial vocabulary of one abstract discipline after another reveals—*those* fields are longing to accomplish. And every time we, as actors, get up off our chairs to "walk through" it, we are engaged in basically the same process I am recommending in this article.

"Yes, but surely an actor must find it easier to enter the human spaces of a dramatic fiction than the merely conceptual 'spaces' of chemistry, logic and so forth." Perhaps; but the tendency of theatre over the past century or so has been to set the stage equal to increasingly abstract kinds of spaces, which actors have then had to learn their way around in. Shakespeare's or Ibsen's places, whatever their symbolic overtones, are still *places;* but in Strindberg's *Dream Play* or Evreinov's *Theatre of the Soul* the stage is identified with—and the performer required to function in—a space that is purely interior. "Still, however, a *human* interior: the inside of somebody's mind." But in the productions of Richard Foreman or the Mabou Mines, or in a "happening," stage space is no longer even "somebody's mind"; it is a kind of abstract "field" within which images can be laid out and juxtaposed. And through this sort of space, too, actors have learned to move. The Strindberg mindscape identifies the stage with a kind of space one degree more abstract than the Ibsen room; the Foreman image-field identifies the stage with a kind of space one degree more abstract than the Strindberg mindscape. The technique I am proposing—which identifies the stage with a kind of space one degree more abstract still—is in reality a continuation of a familiar and productive line of experiment.

If the approach is in fact continuous with earlier theatre work, it ought to be possible to present it to a group of actors in ways that stress the continuities with *their* previous experience. And considering how alien much of the material to be taken up is bound to strike a performer, it would seem especially desirable, whenever possible, to restate the new challenges in terms of their affinities with familiar acting problems.

So, for example, in practice one does not simply *declare* a playing-area to be henceforth equivalent to semantic—or ideological or behavioral—"space," and turn people loose in it: the physicalizing imagination has not been given anything to work with. For a start, the actor needs to know *how* semantics—or ideology or behavior—is like a space; i.e., the basis and details of the analogy. (For instance: semantic relations resemble spatial relations in that definitions lay down "boundaries," synonyms are "close" or "distant," a word has "areas" of suggestion that may or may not "overlap"

with those of other words, etc.) This preparatory analysis is comparable to "a careful study of the script" in more traditional kinds of work: in either case, one is learning the ground rules of the fiction within which one is going to operate.

Once the spatial analogy has been understood, it becomes possible to break down the very general objective "to explore the space" into a series of specific and compassable acting tasks: to imagine the physical characteristics of the space (flat or sloping, broad or narrow, sharply lit or dim, etc.); to discover the constraints and opportunities of the space; to find ways of escaping or transforming the space; to see what sorts of encounters with other actors are like in the space; to think out the implications of a particular posture or movement in the space (if this floor is a "memory surface," what am I doing when I flatten myself out on it, move evasively over it, etc.?).

In other words, one tries—as one always tries in introducing actors to new material—to build on skills and experiences they already possess. This principle dictated, among other things, the *order* of our work in the Baltimore sessions. For while all the uses of "space" we dealt with were metaphorical, some metaphorical "spaces" are more clearly rooted in actual spatiality than others: for example, the "harmonic space" of musical analysis—since harmonies *do* sound in the air—has closer ties with real space than have, say, the "infinite-dimensional vector spaces" of linear algebra. Now it seemed reasonable to suppose that the closer to actual a "space," the more an actor would be able to draw upon previous improvisatory experience in his or her attempts to penetrate it. So it was in the closest-to-actual "spaces" that we began, moving only gradually toward more abstract kinds of "space," in the following sequence: (I) *Shared interpersonal "spaces";* (II) *Interior, mental "spaces";* (III) *The impersonal but still profoundly human "spaces" of language and literature;* (IV) *The impersonal and dehumanized "spaces" of abstract thought.* Transitions from each of these phases to the next were accomplished by "bridge" exercises. For example, to get from Phase III to Phase IV, the actors were asked to invent physicalizations for "extracting the square root of a number." Coming up with a solution here (and some very ingenious solutions were found) involved opening oneself to the spatial implications of *both* the words of the phrase "extract a square root" (thus looking back to Phase III, "Language") *and* the mathematical operation described by those words (thus looking ahead to Phase IV, "Abstraction").

PHASE I. Shared Interpersonal "spaces." To speak of a "remote manner" or of "meeting an opponent halfway" is to speak figuratively. However, there *is* physical space out between people; and its shape or extent may well—what shows it more clearly than stage blocking?—give expression to the nature of relations between them. The "distant" person is likely to keep his distance; the friend who always "stands by" me is often to be found at my side. As a space-metaphor in such close touch with actual spatiality—and as an instance of spatialization familiar to every actor who has ever been blocked into a scene—interpersonal "space" made a secure starting point for our work.

In one of our earliest exercises we laid out the "gap" that divided two unacquainted members of the workshop as an actual stretch of rehearsal-room floor. The two actors could then physicalize their attempt to become better acquainted as a literal "moving toward" one another: they "made advances," "narrowed the distance," "stumbled into awkward areas," "discovered common ground," etc.

The "bridge" exercise leading into the more private "spaces" of Phase II was a variant on this one. Each actor was asked to imagine some difficult-to-know acquaintance of his or hers as a difficult-to-cross *space*, and then—having translated whatever "barriers," "pitfalls," etc. this person presented into *spatial* "barriers," "pitfalls," etc.—to "find a route" or "open the way" to greater intimacy.

PHASE II. Interior, mental "spaces." We now sought to enter "spaces" whose links with real spatiality were more doubtful. Unlike an interpersonal "distance," the "depth" of an individual's remorse or the "extent" of his self-awareness does not spontaneously manifest itself as a region or relation in real space. On the other hand, the fact that our brains are inside our bodies encourages us in the belief that we possess some sort of psychic "interior"—and the Expressionist wing of modern theatre has, as pointed out above, accustomed us to regard this "inner space" as one of the kinds of place a stage can be.

The central exercise for this phase was an exploration of the "inner space" of memory. We worked with four different spatial images of memory, the first drawn from Proust, the other three from the writings of various psychologists: (1) memory as a network of points, each standing for a name, and joined one to another by connecting "lines" of association; (2) memory as a cluttered house; (3) memory as a many-faced solid (where to make an association means to cross an edge and come round onto another face); and (4) memory as a complexly contoured surface (whose craters and channels are initially created—then gradually deepened and joined—by the ceaseless barrage of incoming experiences). The actors were first told to work on clarifying some dim recollection they retained of an object, picture or toy from early childhood. Then, with this act of actual remembering as a reference experience, they were asked to physicalize the search they had just performed mentally as an actual, mimed "search for a lost object" through one after another of the four memory "spaces"—the Proustian point-and-line network, the cluttered house, the many-faced solid, and the contoured surface—with each of which in turn our workspace was temporarily identified. (Incidentally, when I asked which of these physicalizations had felt most like actual remembering, each of the four spatial metaphors had its partisans.)

PHASE III. The impersonal, but still profoundly human, "spaces" of language and literature. I spoke earlier of a tendency in modern literary criticism to conceive structures of words as "spaces." Any such usage carries us yet one step further away from real spatiality. For verbal "space" can be thought of neither as actually "out between" people (like the interpersonal "spaces" of Phase I) nor as actually "inside" the individual (like the mental "spaces" of Phase II). And yet, insofar as both external communication and internal thought-processes "go on in" words, it is just possible to imagine language in the quasi-spatial character of an encompassing medium.

After some preliminary exploration of language itself as a "space" (based on the series of analogies between semantic and spatial relations which I noted earlier), our work for this phase focused on the conception that every individual text constitutes a unique "space"—and that to enter that "space" is to find oneself moving in accord with its peculiar structure and demands.

The text/space to which we sought entry was that of the following story by Kafka:

A Common Confusion

A common experience, resulting in a common confusion. A. has to transact important business with B. in H. He goes to H. for a preliminary interview, accomplishes the journey there in ten minutes, and the journey back in the same time, and on returning boasts to his family of his expedition. Next day he goes again to H., this time to settle his business finally. As that by all appearances will require several hours, A. leaves very early in the morning. But although all the surrounding circumstances, at least in A.'s estimation, are exactly the same as the day before, this time it takes him ten hours to reach H. When he arrives there quite exhausted in the evening he is informed that B., annoyed at his absence, had left half an hour before to go to A.'s village, and that they must have passed each other on the road. A. is advised to wait. But in his anxiety about his business he sets off at once and hurries home.

This time he covers the distance, without paying any particular attention to the fact, practically in an instant. At home he learns that B. had arrived quite early, immediately after A.'s departure, indeed that he had met A. on the threshold and reminded him of his business; but A. had replied that he had no time to spare, he must go at once.

In spite of this incomprehensible behavior of A., however, B. had stayed on to wait for A.'s return. It is true, he had asked several times whether A. was not back yet, but he was still sitting up in A.'s room. Overjoyed at the opportunity of seeing B. at once and explaining everything to him, A. rushes upstairs. He is almost at the top, when he stumbles, twists a sinew, and almost fainting with the pain, incapable even of uttering a cry, only able to moan faintly in the darkness, he hears B.—impossible to tell whether at a great distance or quite near him—stamping down the stairs in a violent rage and vanishing for good.

Translated by Willa and Edwin Muir (Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*, edited by Nahum N. Glatzer)

Our way of "gaining entry" to this text was not to stage its incidents. Our first step was to ascertain the rules governing the space of the story. These may be stated more or less as follows:

1. The more aware you are of moving through the space, the greater the distances in the space become.
2. The space has only two areas: where you are and where you need to be. Wherever you are, where you need to be is somewhere else.
3. Where you are could turn into *where you need to be—if you could stay there. But you cannot.*
4. To take a point as your destination insures either *that you will never reach it* or *that at the moment you reach it, it will cease to be your destination.*

The rules once grasped, the problem we set ourselves was to perform actions *of our own* in a space where such rules—first each by itself, then all simultaneously—were in force. To accomplish the simplest physical objective under such conditions—say, to go and pick up a coin that has been placed in the middle of the floor—turns out to be excruciatingly difficult. "Kafka space," we found, permits only a few, restless, self-defeating action-patterns to be enacted in it; and any independent act *you* initiate, it soon manages to transform back into one of these few, permitted routines.

PHASE IV. The impersonal and dehumanized "spaces" of abstract thought. In our final session we took up spatial usages at the farthest possible remove from actual space—and, what is more, drawn from fields (logic, statistics, computer science) generally regarded as beyond the pale of art. In fact, our plunges into these airless and stringent regions evoked emotional responses of such intensity as to cast doubt on the (largely unexamined) assumption that art and abstract thought-processes do not mix.

Our work in this phase centered on a concept from statistics called "sample space," which means: "The collection of all the possible outcomes for a particular phenomenon." For instance, the "sample space" of a two-way election is: candidate 1 wins, candidate 2 wins, election disputed, election a draw. As such an example illustrates, there is nothing very spatial about "sample space." Yet the concept is not wholly without spatial overtones—a "collection" suggests some sort of deployment of objects in space (signatures on a petition, marbles in a bag, etc.)—and the very adoption of such a term by statisticians reveals the usual longing on the part of those engaged in a highly abstract pursuit that their activity should find its way out into space. The question is: what can theatre do to help?

We took as our starting point a sentence that can be read in several different ways: "I (shut out/reach out to) the world (angrily/fearfully)." This sentence has a sample space of four possible meanings:

OUTCOME 1: *I* shut out *the world* angrily.

OUTCOME 2: *I* shut out *the world* fearfully.

OUTCOME 3: *I* reach out to *the world* angrily.

OUTCOME 4: *I* reach out to *the world* fearfully.

These outcomes describe *actions*, and as a first step toward "putting the space back in sample space," the actors were asked to invent simple physical action-patterns corresponding to each of the four possible sentence-variants.

Four placards, each with one of the four sentence-variants inscribed on it, were now laid out on the floor in a succession of different spatial arrangements: along a line [Figure 1], at the corners of a square [Figure 2], in an irregular pattern that gave spatial expression to the relation one or another member of the workshop thought should exist among the four life-stances in question [Figure 3]. The actors moved through each arrangement of placards in turn (up and down the line, in and out of the square, etc.)—that is: they moved through "sample space" physicalized in each of these different ways—transforming the gesture-pattern associated with each placard into that of the next as they passed from one placard to another.

Then the placards were set aside and the entire workspace was divided into four quadrants, each corresponding to one of the four sentence-variants [Figure 4]. There was now no escape from commitment to *one* of the four outcomes stated by the sentence-variants, since any point an actor could occupy had to fall within *one* of the four quadrants. But, on the other hand, there was considerable "room for maneuver" *within* each option—that is: considerable actual floorspace within which to develop, qualify or even undercut the gesture-pattern within whose "domain" one found oneself.

SHUT OUT ANGRILY | SHUT OUT FEARFULLY | REACH OUT FEARFULLY | REACH OUT ANGRILY

Figure 1

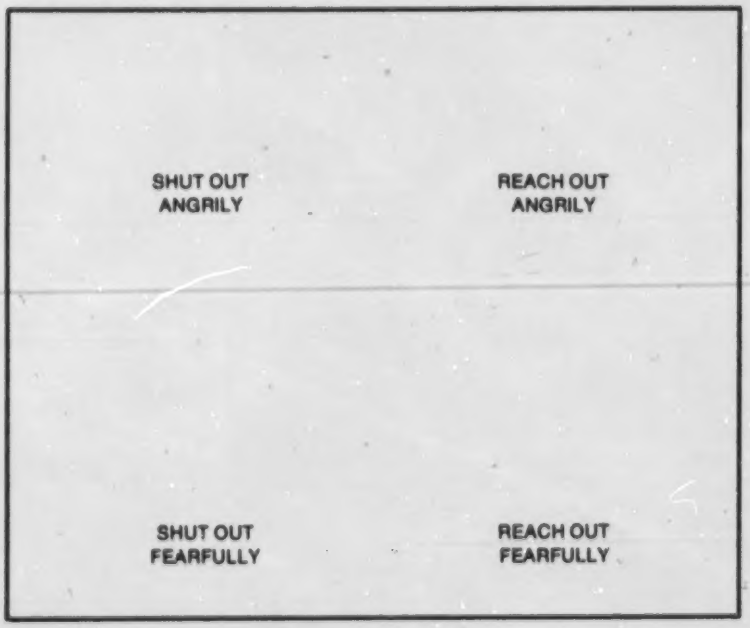

Figure 2

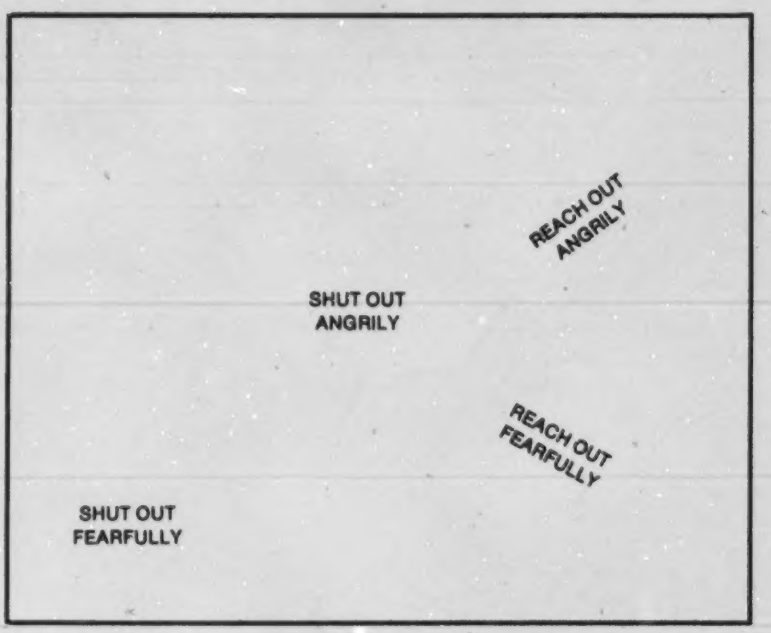

Figure 3

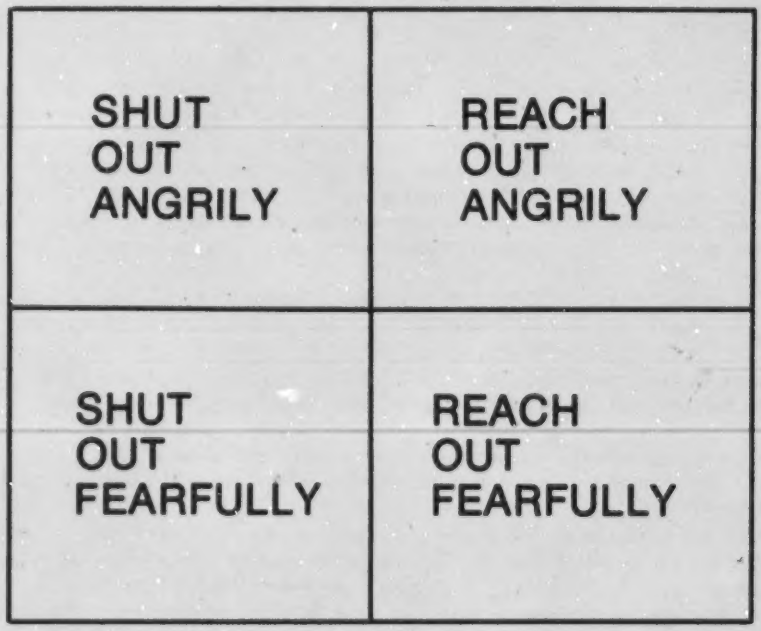

Figure 4

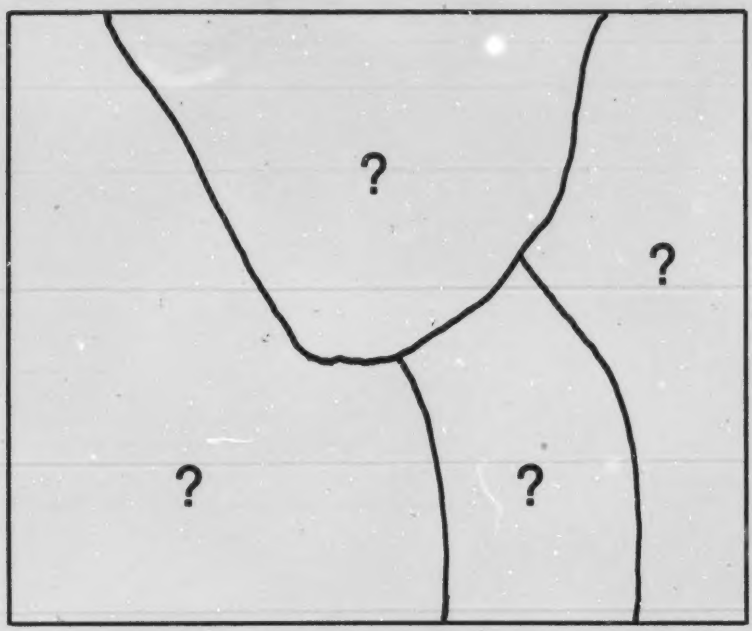

Figure 5

Finally [Figure 5], the entire room was taken as being divided into four irregularly shaped regions, each, again, corresponding to one of the four possible sentence-outcomes. But this time the actors were not informed which region was associated with which outcome—nor where the boundary lines fell. The only way to "keep one's options open" in a "sample space" thus physicalized was to start moving over it at random. The actor could be certain of having crossed the border into a new option only when (on a signal from me) he suddenly found himself performing a different gesture-pattern from a moment earlier.

The remarkable thing about these forays into "sample space" was the *intensity of feeling* they aroused. Let me give an example. During the stage when the placards were positioned at the four corners of a square, with all the actors at once moving in, around and through them, each member of the workshop in turn was instructed to go in and occupy the center of the square. Since this was the point equally remote from all four options, one might expect it would be experienced as a place of repose, "neutral ground." Instead, reaction ranged from "I expected it to feel great; it didn't" to "Suddenly I felt responsible for the safety of the entire group" and even "I felt like Christ on the cross"!

This was quite a level of response to be reached in the course of what was, after all, an exercise in spatialized statistics. Nor was it an isolated example. Again and again over the course of the workshop, participants were astonished at the emotional depth of their response to an abstraction *when the abstraction came to them in the form of a space to cross.*

This, of course, runs counter to the conventional wisdom that abstraction is the great inhibitor of performance energies, the foe to all good theatre work. It may well be that the chief interest of the approach I have been describing is that it compels reexamination of this assumption. For it is an assumption that could *do* with some reexamining—if only on account of the near-universal assent it commands. We pride ourselves on being a threatrical culture that holds any and every received idea about theatre up to scrutiny: how is it this one sacred cow has been permitted to graze on, undisturbed?

To be fair, the assumption is prevalent largely because most everyone has had experiences that appear to confirm it. What student has not read critics in whom an overreliance on some form of abstract thinking—allegorizing, schematizing, politicizing, or just plain rationalizing—seems to have all but destroyed the capacity for immediate response? What actor has not been present at rehearsals where too much "sitting around and talking about it" stopped the juices flowing? But such experiences only go to show that allegorizing, sitting around and talking about it, etc. are none of them fruitful ways of bringing abstraction to bear upon theatre work; they do not prove that there can *be* no such way.

Before knocking ourselves out to find one, however, we are certainly entitled to ask: *What would be in it for theatre?* For one thing, a possible new source of performance energies. In my article "The Visual Script" (T72) I suggested techniques by which abstract graphic patterns might function as a stimulus to the work of the actor. Perhaps *conceptual* abstractions, too—if presented in the right way—also possess this potential. Certainly theatre cannot afford to turn its back on *any* material that gives promise of possessing it. But still more basically: the austere power (to say nothing of the social impact) which abstract thought has attained in the modern world makes it desirable that theatre should be on some sort of terms with it. Theatre has always been fierce in its claim to compass the full spectrum of human experience: the "mirror held up to nature," and so forth. But a philosophical system or a differential equation is as much a product of man's dwelling in the world as is a moral conflict or a personal relationship. Indeed, it might be argued that abstraction is the *most* characteristically human activity: what in nature but the human mind abstracts? Yet theatre cannot so far be said to have done much in the way of establishing relations with this particular branch of the human comedy.

Of course, one cannot just wish such relations into being; there would have to exist some basis for them. Does there?

An abstract thought-process is an internalization—a "taking in"—of what was, originally, action in space. This is clear from the root meanings of the words we use for these operations: to "de-fine" = to mark off a boundary; to "ex-plicate" = to un-fold what had been folded up ("im-plicit"); etc. It finds further confirmation in the discovery of Piaget that our earliest abstract notions come to us through the experience of moving in space. A child literally "arrives at" his or her concept of "outline" by following actual contours; of "order," by setting real objects in rows; of "angle," by performing sharp, rhythmical out-and-back motions; and so forth. (Incidentally, these findings of Piaget's greatly enhance the plausibility of the work-method I have been putting forward. Crawling around some abstract "space" seems a far less peculiar enterprise if it was precisely by crawling around your playroom floor that you developed the capacity for abstraction in the first place.)

Abstraction is not the only adult mental function that owes its origins to such a process. In fact, psychologists have suggested that most of what goes on in an adult head is the internalized version of what was, for the child, some action in space. Thus adult consciousness is most likely a "taking in" of childhood babble, adult fantasy a "taking in" of childhood play, etc.

Now so far as these last-mentioned mental functions—consciousness and fantasy—are concerned, it is clear that theatre possesses the means to restore them to their lost status as events-in-space. In fact, as I pointed out earlier, theatrical production might almost be *defined* as just this very process of reexternalization. But what theatre has done for one sort of internalized action—for the "taken in" prattle which is consciousness, or the "taken in" play which is fantasy—why should it not do for another: the "taken in" spatial movement which is abstraction? Certainly it would be doing nothing contrary to its nature. If an abstraction is an erstwhile action-in-space that has temporarily forfeited its dimension of event—could not very much the same thing be said of the text of a play? And if improvisatory and other rehearsal procedures can restore event-status to the action "locked up inside" a text, why not to the action "locked up inside" an abstraction?

In drawing such a parallel, I do not for a moment mean to suggest that theatre can—or should want to—"be about" abstract thought-processes or conceptions. A theatre piece "about" Boyle's Law or the theory of recursive functions seems as grotesque an idea to me as I imagine it does to the reader. What the method I have been setting forth in this article offers is precisely a way for theatre to concern itself with subjects it *cannot* be about.

Pondering the role of art in an age of abstraction, the poet Wordsworth speculated that henceforth artists might take as their own the work of "carrying sensation into the midst . . . of science itself." The method I have outlined provides a way of realizing this aspiration by—literally—"carrying" the sensing body of the actor "into the" (actual, spatialized) "midst" of a conceptual structure or "area." What theatre is unable to *be about,* it may yet *go amid.* If the abstract cannot "enter into" theatre work, perhaps it is for theatre to "enter"—by techniques such as those explored in the Baltimore workshop—the "spaces" of abstraction. Such a process would make abstraction available to the theatre, even while bestowing on abstract thought-processes—or rather, *restoring* to abstract thought-processes—some of theatre's own quality of immediate, physically experienced activity in space.

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Brecht's Fatzer:

Experiments in Discourse Making

By Andrzej Wirth

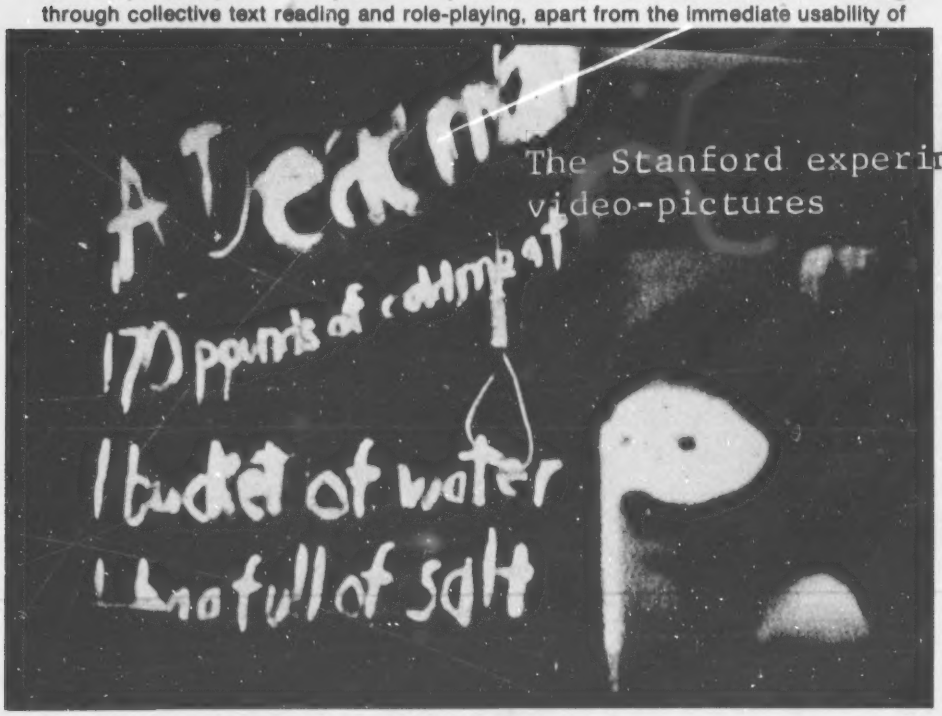
European theatrical thinking of the last fifty years is dominated by the urge to make

theatre theatrical. This urge was a reaction against the text-dominated theatre of the preceding era. Artaud, with his program of the Theatre of Cruelty, became the most radical speaker of this thinking and a trendsetter.

Artaud's contemporary, Brecht, coming from a country where a literary theatre was at home and institutionalized *(Bildungstheater),* demanded an intensification of its literary, "scripted" character. Brecht's postulation of the *"Literarisierung des Theaters"* found the most radical application in his theory of a *Lehrstück.* As a matter of fact, in a way typical of Brecht's subversive strategies, it meant a subiation of the traditional notion of a literary bourgeois theatre. Nevertheless, his postulation pronounces a program opposed to Artaud: theatre does not need to be theatrical!

In Brecht's concept of a *Lehrstück,* it meant an elimination of an audience and a new *genus proximum* for theatre: learning instead of spectating or, more precisely, collective text reading. Brecht himself had no opportunity to apply this program; in his theoretical writings it remains as a suggestion deducible only by implication. In his lyrics and in his epic theatre, Brecht uses a device of the *text-internalized author* (e.g., B. B., Stückeschreiber, etc.). His *Lehrstück* theory implies a notion of the *text-internalized reader.* A triad, Author-Text-Reader, becomes a dynamic model of interactions. An author and a reader are co-producers of a realized text and are also produced by it. It sounds like an anticipation of the structuralist text theories and, indeed, without having the semiological terminology at his disposal, Brecht appears today as a forerunner of the semiological text theory.

Workshops that I conducted in Stanford and Berlin were aimed toward exploring this link, which has been ignored in critical and practical work on Brecht. These workshops attempted to carry Brecht beyond Brecht as exercises in discourse-making through collective text reading and role-playing, apart from the immediate usability of



discourse as activist instruction. Brecht's casual remark that the commentaries should be studied *not* as an instruction but as a style *(eine Schreibweise)* served as inspiration. The exploration of this possibility happened to be revealing and pointing toward an alternative metatheatre.

Artaud's suggestion to do away with the scripted text brought about revolution in Western theatre. Brecht's not yet sufficiently explored suggestion to expand the notion of textuality can revolutionize theatre in a comparable degree. It seems that the "away-from-the-text" experiments reached their peak and nothing new comes from this direction anymore.

Now is the time for the pendulum to swing back toward the despised text. This would not mean a return to the old literary theatre but its subversion to a new concept of textuality as communicative action. The accent shifts from production to *reception,* the latter being a relatively uncontrolled and unaccountable process in a traditional literary theatre.

The Stanford and Berlin workshops focused on a *receptor,* who reproduces the text as reader-player and who himself is *"produced"* by the text. Attention was paid to the gap between an intended receptor-reader role (the text-internalized reader) and a pragmatic one. We tried to play the author and the reader as roles. Through the fictional text we felt liberated from the limitations of reality and yet we felt encouraged to play our own real expectations, beliefs and phobias as an extention of the text. We also felt free to turn our back on the fictional message of the text—or to endorse it. An interplay of an esthetic and pragmatic communication resulted, a unique experience indeed, in which all involved participated collectively in decoding the textual *sense,* endorsing or negating it through the self-produced *meaning.* The text was revealing itself to the participants as the *totality* of an author-produced *sense* and a reader-produced *meaning.*

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How does it differ, one could ask, from a traditional situation of an actor rendering his meaning to an author-produced role in a spectator-focused theatre? In Stanford and Berlin workshops, the dichotomy of the textual sense and meaning was experienced by the participants as a process and as a search for equally valid (within an established discourse) alternative meaning solutions. I see here a novel aspect. Esthetic and pragmatic discourse are kept separated in spectator-oriented theatre. They merge without losing their autonomy in a learning/teaching theatre with all the communicators involved in discourse making.

The Text and the Script-making

The so-called *Fatzer-material,* which remains until now unpublished, consists of fragments, notes, and sketches in the Bertolt Brecht Archive (Berlin, DDR) and in Harvard University's Houghton Library. They are connected with two projects: a *Schaustück* version of 1927 and a *Lehrstück* version of 1929. Neither is complete, so that one speaks more correctly of *Fatzer-material,* than of a *Fatzer-play.* In 1976, the Schaubühne in Berlin tried to reconstruct an "epic" play from the fragments. In F.P. Steckel's production, *Fatzer* was a homecoming drama in the style of the Italian neo-realist cinema. The Schaubühne used the *Schaustück* parts of the "legacy" to reconstruct a play that Brecht had clearly rejected when he decided upon the *Lehrstück* version (which he also never finished).

The Schaubühne's attempt to salvage a *Schaustück* from the *Fatzer-material* seems neither more nor less legitimate than the attempt to derive a *Lehrstück* from the same material. The latter was my intention in a seven-week Brecht seminar at Stanford in the summer of 1977. My ambition was to apply a *Lehrstück* in the spirit of Brecht's most radical, untested postulations; it was to be a play *not* for the spectator but uniquely for the performers themselves. That is to say, no longer a play at all.

The script is a montage of selected parts of the *Lehrstück* version of the *Fatzer-material,* which I investigated in manuscripts and, along with A. Leslie Wilson and David J. Ward, translated into English. The original choice of material for the script was mine; the outcome of this selection depended, however, upon the decision of all members of the seminar.

The theme of Brecht's unfinished play, conceived as a kind of *Heimkehrerdrama* (drama of homecoming), gained in actuality through the development of international terrorism and especially through recent terrorist activities in Germany. Four soldiers, radicalized by the World War I experience, desert from the front and go underground. They expect that a general uprising of the people will put an end to their predicament. The expected revolution does not come, and the isolated self-appointed commune becomes increasingly fanatical and internally divided through the opposition of an individualist Fatzer. Ultimately Fatzer is killed by his comrades shortly before they die themselves by the bullets of the legalists. In the Stanford and Berlin Lehrstück-versions, Fatzer's deviations from the commune are represented naively as Fatzer's "strolls." The group of participants is asked to pass judgment over the deviationist Fatzer who is not so much the commune's enemy as its critic.

This methodology suggests a kind of metatheatre—theatre about theatre—an attempt at a communicative model that sublates (German: *aufheben*) the absolute dichotomy between actor and spectator. Looking-at and re-presenting are, in this case,

no longer fixed poles of the communicative model, but, rather, changing functions *within* the playing, an aspect that relates the experiment as much to an encounter group as to public-*less*, *meta*-theatre. The analogy is, however, deceptive: in an encounter group the members of a group communicate without the mediation of a text; in the Stanford experiment, the text-script, as mediation, structures the communication among the participants.

My working hypothesis was that in the *Lehrstück* the disclosure of meaning is the result of a *ludic* confrontation with the text thesis. That is clearly what Brecht meant when he wrote that the only thing we learn from commentaries is the way they are written. That would, however, further imply that commentaries are not *citable* as the bearers of meaning (as "message"). The same would hold for dialog—in Brecht's terminology, "the document." The goal of the Stanford experiment was to develop a dramaturgy realized in terms of these stipulations.

The work on the script began with the selection of six microscenes around which the commentaries (chorus, anti-choruses, speeches, etc.) are grouped. The ultimate choice of the commentaries was the result of a seminar discussion, but it was also influenced by the impulse to comment engendered by the ludic situation.

Dramaturgy of the Stanford Experiment

The Stanford workshop was intended to be a *series* of experiments, investigating the possibilities of a *"collective reading"* of Brecht's *Fatzer-material*. Both instructed readers (that is, those already familiar with the text) and *uninitiated* readers would participate. Of course we made extensive use of Brecht's master-text, but interpreted rather freely the goals and methodology of *Lehrstück*-theory. The practice with the script lasted only three weeks and took place in a single studio space. Eleven *"learned"* reader-actors, and twenty-three "uninitiated" invitees assembled in a room for 1½ hours to rehearse the reading-role playing-commenting. Each participant had a copy of the master-text placed on a music stand before him. A trained task group—Brecht would call it *"der gelernte Chorus"*—introduced the uninitiated into the *ritual* of speech and action. We had already counted upon the effect of their spontaneous, untrained response; their activity, too, was crucial to the evolution of the concept of our discourse-making "speech-realm machine". (The neologism sounds better in German: *Sprechraummaschine. . .*)

The fundamental spatial arrangement evolved in the course of the practices: a large circle of players demarking an area similar to an arena. Before each participant was placed a music stand with the *Fatzer-material* (the script). The position of the members of the circle was raised by small, 1-step-high platforms. The aspect of role-playing was emphasized by the participants' leaving and returning to the circle. I regard this arrangement as the revival of the "street scene model," which is so important to the *Lehrstück*. The report of the eyewitness for the benefit of those interested—the formula: "show us, we shall show you"—is crucial to the strategy of role-playing in a *Lehrstück*.

The large circle and its choral speaking are the commentary-bearers, the omnipresent system of reference for everything played, or "documented," in the circle. In the Stanford experiment, the Lehr*stück* became Lehr*spiel*, a dramatic reading of the text in space; through the interplay of the two systems of reference, meaning is produced. Thus we have a binary dramaturgy; a commentary system and documentary system, each with a specific *eidetic* sense which is not, however, immediately identical with the *operative* meaning resulting from the interplay of the two systems. The ultimate assign-

ation of meaning is, in the *Lehrstück*, thus understood as only an enabling (experimental) concept, such as we use in physics when we name something before we know what it is—in order to find out what it is.

• The exercise begins with the simultaneous recital of memorized passages; a chaotically pulsating wall of sound results, filling the entire space with cries, poetry, questions, intonations—all fragmented . . . meanings without sense, the audible form of an undefined discourse. The group leader's Chinese gong sounds and silences the din. On a blackboard, the leader announces the first version of the first scene. The language machine starts up, the chorus' lines circulate mechanically from one speaker to the next. The circle of speakers becomes a circle of language; the language machine rolls forward, becoming a "speech-realm machine." The speakers are addressed by their real names and not by role names. One speaker is summoned to act the role of Fatzer. His name is Cyrus; he chooses a few props from the supply and steps out of the circle into its center. Cyrus remains a *role-* and *prop-bearer*, not a character. He demonstrates something that has no reality, only the *act* of his investigation is real. He makes use of a diagram that he has sketched on the floor. Another speaker steps out to correct his diagram. Cyrus' investigation is conducted on behalf of all and does not belong to him. His solo utterances constitute neither monolog nor soliloquy nor a dialog with the chorus-circle. His lines belong not to him, but rather to the entire assembly present at the reading of the text.

Within a linguistic and communicative framework we have, thus, realized a new kind of *discourse*, speech without transition or punctuation (Brecht: *Sprechen ohne Überleitung*). The linguistic collective, acting as a *control chorus*, serves to depersonalize any individual utterance. The vocal and gestural realization can remain fragmentary since it relies ultimately upon a preexistent text, from which it departs and back to which it must return. The reading proceeds in an additive manner—through accumulation of episodic scenes, "epic" commentaries and interjections *("Zwischenrufe")*. At one point, the *Lehrstück* version is confronted with a *Schaustück* version; otherwise the short scenes are assembled in the manner of *Lehrstück*, that is, as "unrealistic" (Brecht: *"ohne Realität"*) role-playing, emphasized by cast changes even, sometimes, in the middle of a scene. In more complex scenes, stereotyped masks indicate the continuity of the role. Most of the seldom-used props have both a real and symbolic function: the cord that connects each particular Fatzer role-bearer to the chorus circle reminds us of his ties to the collective. The roller skates that one of the Fatzer-actors uses during his walk represent an anarchistic freedom of motion.

The reading of the material proceeds with interludes of discussion between scenes. The discussion is incorporated into the formal framework of the *ludic* discourse, and progresses following the incitations of the leader. The juxtaposition of the gesture of representation and gesture of spontaneous debate, along with the general *naiveté* of the production, creates one of the most striking stylistic aspects of the experiment. The rehearsal begins with undifferentiated noises, and ends with a thirty-minute discussion where the participants attempt to pinpoint the ideological positions of the experience. The interplay of initiated and uninitiated participants can be pedagogically interesting and valuable. But it also complicates the question of the *esthetic* quality of the event. Brecht mentions instructed choruses *("Gelernte Chöre")* in the *Lehrstück*. The adjective would be redundant if he had not also had some conception of an "uninstructed" chorus. Nevertheless, it is this co-presence of initiated and uninitiated speakers that creates, even in a very limited way, the *oratorio*-like effects in the *Lehrstück* performance.

This problem of naming helps to explain Brecht's reluctance to pinpoint the meaning of a particular *Lehrstück*. He should have said much more about the fundamental

Cyrus investigates the role of Fatzer; a spontaneous debate follows

opposition between the *Schauspiel* and the *Lehrspiel*. The word *"Stück"* is misleading, since it suggests a more direct dependence of sense-making on the text than is actually the case. A *Lehrspiel*, on the other hand, is a playing out of teaching and learning—two often-conflicting aspects of the same process. It is metapedagogical in the same way as it is metatheatrical. It is *about* teaching and *about* learning. "The message," "the moral," can not be found in and quoted from the master text. It is but a function of the proceedings. But even the proceedings do not have the status of anything final. They too are relativized by the experimental character of the material, the alternative scenes, the commentaries, and, no less importantly, the integrated discussion. This aspect of the *Lehrspiel* was especially striking in Stanford: the emphasis on process rather than result, the open ended, *curricular* character of experiments.

In Stanford, the similarities and differences between the concept of the Brechtian *Lehrstück* and "alternative theatre" as practiced in the States became noticeable. In Germany, with its predominance of *"Bildung"*-theatre, the impulses toward alternative work in the theatre have proceeded from the complex and refined *Lehrstück* theorizings—that is to say, from above. But these endeavors got stuck halfway for a lack of solid support from "below" which could carry through and further develop the theorizings. Those Germans working with the *Lehrstück* are still speculating about who should perform the plays: a school child, a worker, or a theatre person.

In the States, where there is no *"Bildung"*-theatre and where serious theatre has no established position in the cultural system, the incitement for alternative theatre has come from below. Its motivation is existentialist and not philological or political. Alternative theatre originates here from alternative modes of living: from the hippie movement, the drug subculture, and encounter groups. In the Stanford discussion, the Brechtian pedagogy was pronounced "unfair" by a few members of the experiment: "the decks are stacked against Fatzer." Irrespective of the correctness of such arguments, they are certainly symptomatic. They show how antipathetic the Americans find the Rousseaulan-Hegelian distinction between the autocracy of the "common will" and the will of all. The terrorist pedagogy derived from this distinction strikes the Anglo-Saxon mind as suspicious, whereas it would be accepted unhesitatingly in the Hegelian-Marxist tradition. (Paradigm: Fatzer, who pleads for free space for his private will, allows himself to be bound to the bed in order to continue to follow the "common will" of the collective.) The cultural variation in the perception of the idea of democracy is striking and was confirmed a year later in the Berlin experiment with *Fatzer*.

An evaluation of the Stanford workshop results by the participants brought out several significant realizations:

> *1. The precondition for a* Lehrspiel *should be participation in the* Schaustück.
>
> *2. If the playing group is either ideologically heterogeneous or indifferent, the subject of the teaching becomes the* Lehrstück *itself (as a communicative form) and NOT the ideology that motivates it.*
>
> *3. The* Lehrstuck *as play for players measures, as does a thermometer, the ideological temperature of the participants. (In the case of Stanford, the temperature was significantly low.)*
>
> *4. The participants experienced the exercise both as observers and as players (actors, in the conventional sense). This proves that the sublation of the performer/spectator dichotomy is possible.*
>
> *5. The discussion integrated in the playing and elicited by it is perhaps the most important facet of the experiment.*

The cognitive results of the Stanford Experiment cannot be gleaned from the videotape, which documents only one evening of uninterrupted work (there is no premiere, no performance *tel quel*). Working journals kept by several participants are of considerable importance, since they document the ways in which the *discourse-making process* changed. They also reveal how the interest originally directed at the character of Fatzer evolved into self-comprehension. Americans still regard individualism as a saving grace, and for a few participants the Fatzer role represented the exorcism of class guilt. But we did not altogether lack remarks such as:

> *There will undoubtedly be a residual lesson after* Fatzer *is over and that's a start. I have had to stop and question lifestyle in the light of this project. Not that I am fashioning a Marxian ideal out of myself but I am directing myself towards the active left . . . I would much prefer to present people with a problem and let them decide for themselves, as Brecht desired.*

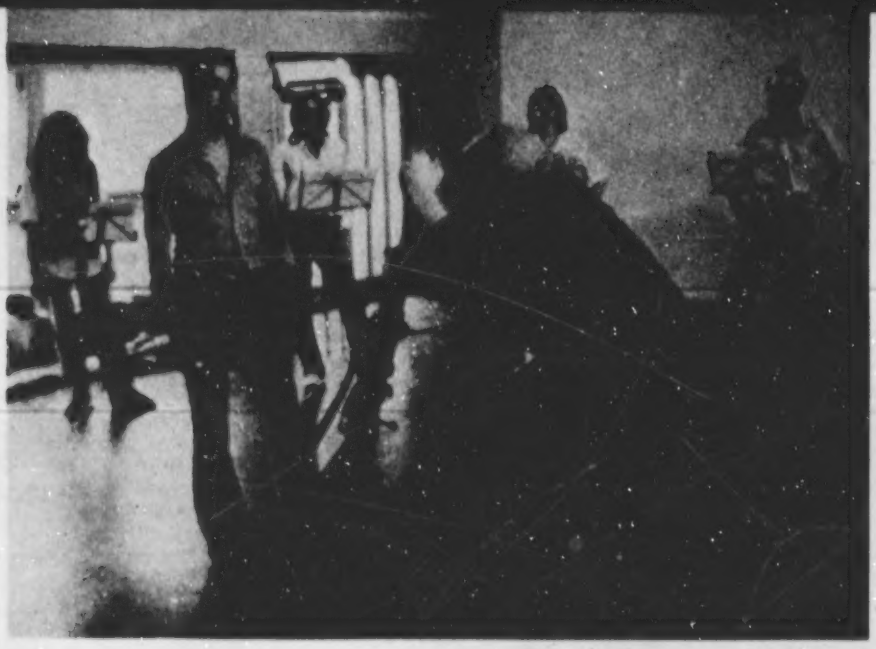
Such remarks document the *procedural* character of the *Lehrstück's* possible pedagogical consequences. Perhaps the players learned nothing that can be presented as a thesis, but new thinking processes were inspired and set in motion.

The Berlin Experiment

The Berlin experiment was conducted in the environs of the Freie Universität. A difficult issue with the Berlin group were the demands of the artistic form: these demands were opposed as an authoritarian discipline or as an esthetic deviation. The motivation for the group work was obviously more ideological than esthetic; the opposite seemed to be the case at Stanford. In Berlin, the majority of the participants seemed to be interested in using Brecht as a tool for creating an ideologically homogeneous and exclusive collective. A fictional model of an destructively exclusive and self-righteous collective provided by the *Fatzer*-script was carried further with gusto into the context of life. An outsider who expressed friendly interest in the work of the group, and asked for permission to watch its proceedings, was sent away through the majority vote. We referred later, a little embarrassed, to this event as "the execution of Fatzer" . . . New elements introduced in the Berlin experiment were:

> *1. Exclusion of invitees to secure a self-contained group discourse.*
> *2. Shift toward oratorio-like form of delivery.*
> *3. More "reading than role playing."*
> *4. Composition of a scenario (script) based exclusively on thematic and not dramatic guidelines; continuity and completeness of the story ignored.*
> *5. Intensification and inventive differentiation of commentaries.*

The intended *self-containment of the discourse,* an effort to create a neutral space for reading, did not work in practice. The film recording of the last session (done by an outsider) revealed the intrusion of outside reality—incidental street noises, park strollers visible through the window, political posters of the PLO, and a Christian cross on the wall (the studio was courtesy of the Evangelic Student Association). The commentaries provided by the group members were setting a distance with the text. The scrambles of the outside reality caught incidentally by the moving camera were setting a distance to the commentaries. It was a confirmation, in words of one of the participants, that film



An omni-present circle dismembers Fatzer's monologs

documentation is the necessary element of a *Lehrstück* workshop, and that through the documentation the political sense of the work becomes clear to those involved in doing it or those who are interested in watching the documentation. This would mean that the "publicless" event is not necessarily elitist or esoteric. To the contrary: initiated in the confinement of a studio-laboratory as an interplay of esthetic and pragmatic communication, a discourse expands behind its walls and, once recorded, reveals its endless links with the macro-discourse of life.

Exploration of oratorio-like forms meant introduction of altering solo and choral speech patterns. Wooden blocks were used to indicate the beat and the cesurae. Alleatoric technique was used effectively for the delivery of the poetic texts; the participants were uttering *ad libitum* single lines of a poem—reacting to the text, to the tone of the predecessors, and setting in a improvisatory way their own pace and cesurae.

The form arrived at was "semic/asemic": it included both meaningful passages and passages of sound that had no meaning. Each time, preceding the exercise, the formal aspects of the presention (rather than the content) were described by an especially designated speaker, responsible for what was named as *"artistic protocol."* These meta-linguistic promptings concerned with "how" not "what" became part of a discourse, and not a hidden footnote as in traditional literary theatre. As the delivery in each reading slightly varied, the "artistic protocol" contained also the critique of the previous realizations. Decisions concerning the artistic form were made collectively; the proposals of the workshop leader carried through only if accepted by the majority.

The Berlin experiment was dominated by "loud reading" and role-playing was secondary and incidental. Loud reading with the readers standing in a circle, the text on the music stand, did not require memorizing; also the commentaries made by participants were written down and read as a *text.* Only lines that were uttered by individual performers interacting within the circle required memorizing.

Different modalities of reading were tried to indicate the dichotomy of the scripted and of the vocalized text (writing versus reading). The text of one of the choruses was read once in a normal vertical sequence and then in a reversed one (that is to say from the bottom of the page upwards). This happened to be not a purely formalistic game. The readiing was suggestive of a self-contained and circular arguing of the chorus (the nontransferral character of war experience). The vocalization of the text meant not playing it but strictly reading it, pointing to the self-presence of a speaker with all the esthetic consequences (e.g., the silence of a speaker/reader is complete and signifies silence, while that of an actor may signify different things).

The incidental role playing was episodic, discontinuous; it was intended as presentational, with changing role-bearers, playing not "characters" but type-masks, often with reversed sex assignment. Props were used sparsely and symbolically. Also here an attempt was made to show meta-language and object-language as parts of the same discourse. Role-bearers were "modeled" into tableaux by "directors" called from the circle by the group and reading their directions aloud.

Differentiated patterns of walking and movement were developed for the Fatzer role-bearers in the Stroll Sequence; they signified methphorically different aspects of the Fatzer-type relation to the collective; e.g., a somnambulistic, blind walk, colliding with the cordon line of the chorus who responded with a warning signal; or Fatzer, boxing his way through the confinement of the collective (in boxing gloves, a symbolic requisite).

The formal inventiveness of the group was oriented toward dissolution of monologic and dialogic forms in the universality and infinity of the discourse. Fatzer's monologs, in their solipsistic assertiveness, were interrupted and dismembered through interjections and random comments *("Zwischenrufe")* and the comments from an omni-

present circle; the *stichomythia* of the dialog through the application of the indirect speech (Sex-Sequence) or through solo reading (The Execution Sequence). The doubling of a role-bearer, with one player doing the speaking and the other one doing the gesturing, was used to stress the paradigmatic and analytical aspect of the discourse.

The self-righteous imposing of obligatory values—what Roland Barthes calls *terrorist discourse*—interested Brecht in *Fatzer.* It had more appeal in Berlin than at Stanford where the interest was focused on the defense of a liberal *neither-nor discourse.* Within the fictional choices provided by the script, the Berlin group was decisively for the execution of Fatzer, the Stanford for his acquittal.

The commentaries from the circle defined in Berlin as *Zugelesenes* ("material read into . . .") were composed of excerpts from other Brecht's works indicating a counterposition to Fatzer, quotations from other authors (Adorno, Benjamin, Habermass, etc.) as well as actual newspaper clippings (e.g., the Pope's letter to the Red Brigades on behalf of Aldo Moro, the ex-Nazi Filbinger affair, etc.). They were offered on the call of the announcer, who was also responsible for reading the titles for each sequence. The intensity and diversity of commentaries grew as the work progressed: many commentaries were reactions to those made in a preceding session; the work had an accumulating effect. Also, as the time passed, material-oriented comments gave way to more subjective and aggressive remarks concerning the discussion, the material or the working methods of the group.

> Since it's impossible anyway, *simply*
> *throw away the whole play as an experiment, without any reality:*
> *toward* "self-understanding" *(FM 109/56)*

Perhaps this cryptic note by Brecht about the *Fatzer* project is more universal than its context might suggest. That is, the *Schauspiel*—with its duality of stage and auditorium, with the built-in dissymmetry of its communicative [illegible] with its pretenses to represent reality—is recognized to be impossible for [illegible] thinks radically about changing reality. An alternative is suggested—an exp[illegible]ystem of *symmetrical* communication that no longer thematizes reality but rather [illegible]*ls;* its goal is to bring the acting-playing subject to self-understanding.

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A Workshop

With Ryszard Cieslak

By Dan Ronen

Apocalypsis Cum Figuris marked the last theatrical performance of the Polish

Theatre Lab. Although this spectacle is still performed periodically by the group, its members are primarily concerned with different projects. Initially these projects were termed "paratheatre." The name was transformed gradually and moved outside the realm of legitimate theatre. Grotowski started to use the term *Active Culture*. Very recently, a new term emerged out of this innovative group of artists: *Theatre of Roots* (or *Roots of Theatre*). What exactly this new term brings with it is still to be discovered.

The following is a description of a Theatre of Roots workshop led by Ryszard Cieslak of the Polish Theatre Lab and co-led by myself. It was a ten-day workshop that included twenty participants (an even number of men and women) and took place in and around Penn State University. Ryszard Cieslak arrived from Poland May 18, 1978. The workshop started May 20th and ended May 29th. (The following day, Cieslak performed in *Apocalypsis Cum Figuris* in Poland.) A few quotes from an interview with Grotowski (March 16, 1977) will preface the work done at the workshop:

> *Throughout our work we dealt with a search around the human being. At the beginning the terrain of our search was the ground of the theatre . . . what we are doing now, that is to say more or less since 1968 or 1969, is to use buildings in the city, urban space, space outside the city, natural open spaces, space on a road that goes for many kilometers, a space that appears when we are ready to leave that road and penetrate there where there are no roads, in the forest for example—in the literal sense and the metaphorical sense, then we return to the city because we always remain plunged in the life of other human beings . . . We want the entire experience to appear, all creation, from the presence of those people who participate. . . . It is an experience that has no spectators. There is no separation between the creative process and the creative result. This is the experience of Active Culture. It comes from all the participants and is shared by all of them, and not the results of that experience. . . . This is not a product of Active Culture but the direct experience of Active Culture. . . . Since the creation is taken from the participants, it can never be repeated. It is different each time. . . . It is a shared activity and not shared expression. . . . There is nothing to understand—do and react.*

General Outline

Participants for the workshop were chosen on a personal basis. By notifying certain people that were generally familiar with Cieslak's recent work, I attempted to secure mutual trust and a good starting point. Still, after a preliminary interview with each member of the group, Cieslak decided against working with two of them. The reason for this decision was basically a feeling on Cieslak's part that these two did not have a real need or desire to go through the experience. During the first meeting of the final group of participants, Cieslak outlined the basic approach:

> *The continuing line of my work is search—whether it is in the theatre or parallel to the theatre. I have only a very general idea about this workshop and I am open to any developments. My main concern is to deal with the group as a live organism and create circumstances for mutual sharing. The workshop is a series of activities suggested to the group by any one of its participants. It will be divided into two basic parts that are an organic development: (a)* Indoors—*we shall meet every evening and share experiences offered as invitations, or propositions, suggested to the group by any one of us; (b)* Outdoors—*we shall spend three days and three nights out in the woods.*

The Indoors Space

Out of several possibilities, the Pavilion Theatre was chosen. It is an arena theatre converted from an old barn. It is a relatively small building with several interesting spaces in it. The area of the stage is an open space with fixed seats around it. From this open space there are entrances into several rooms that lead to the basement and to balconies above. Directly below the stage there is a dance studio with a wooden floor. Cieslak liked the space not because it was a theatrical space but in spite of its being one.

In order to adjust the space to our needs, the lights on and around the stage were turned off, and only candles were used for illumination. This space was designated by Cieslak as the "resting" space. Through a trap door we inserted a ladder that led to the lower space, which was designated as the "working" space. In the "resting" space we put food, blankets, musical instruments and everyday clothing. These were not to be used in the "working" space below.

Most of the first meeting was spent cleaning, arranging and adapting the space to our needs. Through this simple and direct activity people started to get to know each other and the environment. The contact was obviously real and physical. We were to spend the next seven nights in this space.

The First Seven Days

During the first six days, the group met at 7:30 p.m. and remained together between six and eight hours every night. We did not live together, though a large percentage of the participants stayed together, sharing the floor of two rooms in a motel. During the first night, after we finished cleaning and arranging the space, I wrote in my journal:

> *Ryszard explains what he means by the word "invitation" of "proposition": ". . .something you would like to share with the group, something you would like to do with the group . . . some kind of a search you would like to propose to the group and invite others to join you. . ." Ryszard emphasizes that propositions should not necessarily be sad propositions, on the contrary, the group should search for real happiness. "Leave your everyday life outside and search for a real contact."*

The first proposition came from Cieslak. It was a very simple and basic invitation for the participants of the group to see each other and touch each other. Simple and direct physical contact. Cieslak did not participate but observed very closely. I wrote:

> *It seems that the group started very freely with the physical contact. To a certain degree a cliché of 1960's behavior. There is a fast, but somewhat superficial, contact. Ryszard stops the group and says: ". . .don't work so hard on creating the contact . . . It's only done for the sake of having fun . . . in order to make contact. Do something for somebody. There has to be an exchange . . . "I am with you," means sharing; sharing is contact . . . Don't be selfish. Give and you will receive. . ."*

The final proposition came from one of the participants. Lying side-by-side on our backs, we formed a connected row of bodies. Each one in his turn, we rolled over the rest of the group. The contact was immediate and real. We all laughed; the tension that there was at the beginning disappeared, and there was no attempt to deliver any kind of

predicted results. The physical, simple contact channelled the group toward real reaction. Interestingly enough, following this experience, when Cieslak suggested we end the first day, the group applauded. Cieslak's reaction was immediate. He asked the group to refrain from this observational kind of response. In spite of this little incident, when we talked about the first day we both expressed our delight from the work of the group. We felt that very soon we would be able to reach much deeper experiences.

The second day established a characteristic pattern for our work indoors. Cieslak introduced two sets of exercises that were developed in the Polish Lab Theatre over the years, and we used them as a beginning and returning point of our work. The two sets are called *Plastiques* and *Corporeals*. Cieslak called them "Details" and "Elements." Going directly to the lower space, we started with "details." The work was based on the isolation of parts of our body and the manipulation of each part separately. For the next two hours, each person worked in silence, concentrating on the minute and exact manipulation of the different parts of his body. It proved to be hard physical work, since Cieslak constantly encouraged the group not to give up and stop:

> *We are working on each joint of our body. Starting with the neck, going through the shoulders, elbows, wrists, chest, torso, hips, knees, and down to our toes—we apply a circular movement. The rhythm of the circular movement changes continuously. Emphasis is on the concentration upon each detail of the movement. "Provoke your body," says Ryszard. "Attack it. Don't give up. Don't stop!" The physical work is very specific. The hard wooden floor, the deep concentration and the continuous repetition for a period of two hours create a natural physical climax. Though no one utters a word, at a certain moment we all move upstairs.*

Here, in the "resting" area, people started to play musical instruments. Some of the musical instruments required a degree of expertise (like a guitar), but most of them were percussion instruments that enabled anyone to create music. One of the very first things that became evident through the music making was the strong feeling of a group. A discussion followed this experience, and I noted in my journal:

> *People are still trying to find out what is expected of them. Ryszard explains his point of view, using an example: "When Peter Brook gave a workshop for actors in Poland, he asked them to walk through a door. None of the actors walked simply through it. Peter Brook was searching for the same thing we are—the simple things that create contact."*

Following the discussion, we went downstairs and continued to work on the "details." Cieslak was more explicit about the work:

> *Use the "details" to create a conversation with yourself, with others and with the surrounding space. Use the "details" as a pretext, or a jumping board, to your associations. Go beyond "details"; if associations occur, go with them, but don't force associations. Though it is physically hard, emphasize the fun part of your work. Concentrate on the contact with yourself, with others, with the space and with your associations.*

At that time, Cieslak introduced the second set of exercises: "Elements" are basically body positions that stem out of the spine. Any kind of position that concentrates on the work of our spine falls into this category. As with the details, so it was with the "elements"—the emphasis was not placed upon the successful execution of the position

but rather upon the exact and precise search after the position. Some of the "elements" involve movement from one basic position to another (like the famous "cat" sequence), and other "elements" consist of one basic position (e.g., the shoulder stand). Precision was an important part of the search but had nothing to do with the esthetic execution of the exercise. The route to the position, to the "element," was the core of our work. Though some of the "elements" were basically static body positions, the connection between them created movement. Eventually the work on "elements" became a continuous movement from one "element" to another. Cieslak repeated endlessly in the course of the workshop that " 'details' and 'elements' are only the springboard into creativity" and not the final goal.

Following two more hours of hard physical work, we went upstairs, where Cieslak asked for propositions from the group. Several propositions were introduced and experienced by the group: We searched for our partners (from the work on "details" and "elements") with our eyes closed; we asked each other questions, trying to answer as honestly as possible, and played a game of "tug of war." At the end of the second day I wrote:

> *Ryszard stimulates simple contact. Using "details," "elements" and, periodically, an imaginary stimulant (like "hold an imaginary horse or imaginary balloon"), he is searching after an experience in the here-and-now. Honest search is the crux of the work. In "plastiques" the emphasis is upon minute details, while in "elements" the emphasis is upon the spine as a carnal point. Ryszard's repeated words are: "proposition," "invitation," "sharing," "joy," "provocation," "contact."*
>
> *There is no definite division between the upper space and the lower space. So far it seems that downstairs we are doing physical work, and upstairs is designated for active rest. There is a definite organic development carried from one space to the other. Today's session ended with a simple "thank you" from the group.*

The following four days maintained the basic characteristic pattern of the second day. The group moved from one space to the other in an organic natural flow. At any given moment, some sort of invitation was carried through, whether specifically suggested by someone or simply developed spontaneously out of some other proposition. There was no rigid order in which the group worked. Some days we started with "details" or "elements"; other days with music making and sometimes with somebody's proposition. Needless to say, there was a sense of development from moment to moment. The more we worked with the "details" and "elements," the more we felt freed from them. More and more, the music became a real contact between the participants, and there were several nights that we felt a genuine feeling of creation. With the mutual trust came the sincere and deep search. As our work continued, it became less and less important who made the initial proposition, whether it was Cieslak or one of the participants.

It seems that the first deep experience occurred during the third night:

> *We started today with music making. There was no specific invitation, but since we stayed upstairs people started to play various instruments. Very gently, people explored the musical instrument and slowly started to create musical contact. Some vocal singing joined in, and a sense of continuity started to prevail. The music started to fill the space. At a certain moment, Ryszard extinguished the candles, and only one candle remained, illuminating the area. Suddenly the music started to build up. Ryszard gave the candle to someone. All the group gathered around that person, continuing the chant-music. Hands went up toward the light. Now everybody was touching the candle. One*

> *flame, little flame, and one body. The candle started to move from one hand to another. The music seemed to flow with the flame. Then suddenly the flame died. But not the energy of the group. The crystal moment only broke into many directions, and the group broke into individuals. The whole experience lasted for almost two hours.*

Day by day, our work with "details" and "elements" became more of a stimulant and less hard work. We started to improvise through physical work, using "details" and "elements" as the musician uses musical notes. The "exercise" became less of an exercise and more of a real stimulant. We started to improvise with each other, with the hard wooden floor, with an imaginary partner from nature ("rain," "sun," the "sea"...) and an imaginary partner from our lives. Once in a while, when Cieslak felt that there was no real contact, he used to inject a stimulus. For instance, one night he poured water all over the people. At other times he explained:

> *... do not disturb the flow of somebody else's associations ... don't be selfish ... When there is no association go back to "details"... Do not mix "details" with "elements"... Carry on a "conversation" with others, but don't stick to them ... Total release is an empty and meaningless creation; arrested energy will carry you to the unknown ... A polished gesture is sterile ... Symmetry is an indication of lack of real experience ... Contact is not necessarily physical—rhythm can be a deeper contact with somebody ... It is more important what happens between "details" and "elements" then what you are doing with them—use them as a springboard in search of the "private" or "personal" moment ... Everything is stored in your body; your body will propose the moment ... The hard floor can become anything and then again a hard floor ... Do not "pump" your emotions. When the moment will come, your whole body will respond, and it will be a much fuller moment...*

On the sixth night, when we worked with "details" and "elements" for the last time, something very deep occurred:

> *There is a very strong feeling that the group reaches beyond the physical part of the exercises. The image that comes to mind is that of a river. There is the main stream from which you depart and to which you return, but there are also side streams. Now the side streams become as important as the main stream. And even more important. There is a feeling of an underground river that people discover and get in touch with.*

This was the last time we worked with the physical exercises, and though Cieslak never said it out loud, it seems that the group reached a point where these were not necessary.

Every night some people offered propositions. Since the main point of these invitations was, as Cieslak pointed out, to "...engage the whole group in your personal needs," there was no clear line of continuity. At the same time there was an inner development. Propositions became more and more specific, more and more personal, and appeared to be generated by real needs.

Among others, the group went through the following experiences:

> *Eyes closed, the participants lined up and, holding hands, went through the different spaces in the building ... Putting all our clothes in a pile, we told stories while dressing up, using clothes from the pile ... We sat in a circle around the candles and answered questions*

> *posed by other members in the group . . . We wandered around the building with musical instruments, creating contact with the space and with others. . .*

It was obvious that the specific propositions were triggered by the specific space we were in, were a direct result of the unique combination of the participants in the group, and were influenced by Cieslak's remarks about the power of silence. During the sixth night, when we were experiencing one of the invitations that involved the musical instruments, it so happened that for a very long time music did not emerge. Suddenly the space was filled with a vibrating energy, and, though the music created was very soft, there was a tremendous feeling of deep sharing. At the end of this experience, Cieslak said something that threw light upon all our work:

> *. . . It worked like a woman pregnant for a very long time. Suddenly birth occurred and it was real birth. This is what I mean when I say "irrepeatable creation," a one-time creation that happens at the time of real and direct meeting.*

The seventh day of the workshop was spent entirely with practical arrangements before leaving on the second part of our adventure. We rented tents, bought food, gathered our belongings, and made decisions about sharing responsibilities. Following Cieslak's invitation, each of us also made sure that we were taking with us at least one object that we particularly treasured. The next morning we were ready for the outdoor part of the workshop.

The Last Three Days

The group found a place deep in the woods, about twenty miles from State College. The place satisfied all our needs: It was deep in the woods, isolated from weekend visitors, had running water (a creek) and enough of an open space to allow us to make a large fire. We spent most of the first day arranging the space, building the tents, collecting wood, building the fire, and exploring the surrounding area.

After having our first dinner in the forest, and after making sure that we had enough coffee for the night, we discussed plans concerning our activities in the forest. It was agreed that there was a danger of this whole experience turning into a weekend picnic. We decided to avoid any kind of everyday conversation and to talk only if it was absolutely necessary.

The first night we involved ourselves in one activity only. Using little bells that we had brought with us, we all went into the dark forest:

> *Every person went in a different direction. The only light came out of the big fire, but it disappeared when you went deeper into the woods. Once in a while, one could hear the sound of the bells. After some time, the forest enfolded you entirely. Hearing became the dominant sense, but very tricky at that. There was no way of telling where you were and where you were going. Personally I felt a very strong need to*

communicate with the rest of the group. The very first thought that struck me at that time was the enormous difference between the stimulation indoors and the experience outdoors. Suddenly there was no need for any external stimulation. Your imagination, your creativity and your entire being united in a natural flow and formed one entity.

After a very long time—I don't know how long since we agreed not to take watches with us—I decided to return to the fire. After a few moments, I realized that I was actually very close to the fire, though I thought that I was rather far from it. It felt as if the fire created a magnetic pole that drew you back to it.

One by one, people started to appear near the fire. Spontaneously, music was created with the instruments that we had brought with us. There was no talking, only glances to find out what was the experience of others. We went to sleep and woke up with the sun high in the sky. The second day was spent in preparation for the night activities. Cieslak collected several propositions and edited them into a sequence. People went to look for appropriate spaces for their propositions and made arrangements for the particular experience. Immediately following dinner, we sat around the fire, and Cieslak explained:

I would like to propose that tonight we shall go through the different propositions in total silence. We'll call it our night vigil. There is a different leader for each one of the experiences. At the end of each invitation, we'll come back here. We'll maintain our silence. From here we'll go to the next experience. The connecting activity will be an ongoing making of bread that we'll eat at sunrise.

The first experience involved men and women separately. The women went to one side of the creek, and the men went to the other. Although I don't know what the women went through, since they agreed not to talk about it, I know that their experience involved the element of water. As for us:

We washed each other; carried each other above the water, creating a human bridge; dried each other, and put on each other's socks and shoes . . . The deepest memory of this experience is the sharp image of the women returning from their experience. By that time we were already by the fire. First we heard a soft and beautiful chant coming out of the darkness. Slowly the women emerged out of the woods, smiling and chanting, came to us and offered a drink of water from a little dish they had in their hands. . .

After a short and silent pause by the fire, we moved together to another place. There, again in total silence, we danced in the dark forest. When we returned to the fire, our dough was nicely growing in preparation for the baking. After the following experience, I wrote:

We all took with us the object that we treasure. Fatigue is already a part of the experience. By now we already climbed the mountains several times; we danced and didn't sleep for many hours. We start our walk to the next experience. It is a very long and exhausting walk. Finally we arrive and gather around an open hole in the ground. Ryszard quietly explains: "We are going to lie inside the hole one by one. Once you are inside, close your eyes because we'll be throwing dirt on your body. After that, say your name and give the thing that you treasure to someone else, who will then enter the hole." I find it very hard to throw dirt on somebody's body—even harder than lying inside the hole. What strikes me as a terrible paradox is the fact that you are giving the object you treasure to someone who will have to go and lie in the hole. The association of the grave is inevitable, and the whole experience reaches symbolic dimensions.

The final experience of that night was the baking of the bread at sunrise. We all ate the bread and eventually went to sleep. The next day was devoted to some rest and making of torches. At night, after our last dinner together, Cieslak and I went to prepare the last proposition. Putting torches in the ground, we marked off about 100 yards of a road. Since the road curved, one could not see the other end. When we were done, the group gathered at the beginning of the road and Cieslak explained the proposition: "Let's call it 'the last run of your life.' One by one, we'll run on the road lit by the torches. When you arrive to the other end, call someone else. Run as fast as you can, as if it was the last run of your life." This was the last experience of the workshop.

Some Afterthoughts

There is no doubt in my mind that every participant in the workshop left with different thoughts and feelings. There was at least one that left with a feeling of frustration, rejecting the whole idea. There were others that felt a tremendous benefit but, when asked, could not specify what it was. At the same time, some participants reacted to the workshop as a symbolic journey. Obviously, in this kind of experience there is no right or wrong. Whatever the experience—or lack of experience—of the individual, it defines precisely what happened to that individual. At the end of the workshop Cieslak remarked:

From my previous experience I know that only after a few weeks, and sometimes even later, people start to grasp what they went through during the workshop. Each and every one of us will benefit in a

different way, will absorb the experience in a different way, but whatever happened happened right here when we were together.

This is precisely what the workshop was about. It was designed to offer circumstances for a one-time, irrepeatable creation that occurred at the moment of meeting between the leader and the individual participants. The various propositions were the initial stimuli, the basic structures that define the particular terrain of a specific experience. It is entirely up to the individual, or group of individuals, where these stimuli were to spring into a creation. If and when this moment of creation occurs, it is the moment of *Active Culture*.

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The Rituals

of Walking and Flying:

Public Participatory Events

at Actor's Lab

By Ron Grimes

I am in a state of culture shock.

When this way of naming my state occurred to me, I

thought it metaphoric. Now I do not. I have decided that the Public Participatory Event (PPE) was a nascent community, a subculture appearing as an event. An event is more ephemeral than the network of structures we call a "culture," but the event I concluded a few days ago leaves me more a stranger at home and work than I felt the first day I stepped foot in either. I have no choice but to reconceive the assumption which I have carried to much of my scholarly work in religious studies and anthropology, namely, that culture is a configuration largely of language, thought, and art. I am certain now that culture also resides quite literally in the bones; that is, in our patterns of moving, breathing, walking and so on. Two weeks of radically altered ways of moving have precipitated for me new ways of thinking, speaking, and being with others. I find that I am having translatable physiological and kinesic responses to the formal, academic events around me."

These lines record some of my feelings a short time after the conclusion of the first formal Public Participatory Event (PPE) conducted by Actor's Lab of Hamilton, Ontario. The Lab, directed by Richard Nieoczym, still conducts such paratheatrical (and I contend, pararitualistic) events, though usually on a smaller scale. This extract from my journal hints at a crucial problem connected with paratheatrical efforts inspired by Jerzy Grotowski and the Polish Theatre Laboratory.

During the seminar on ritual in the theatre at The New Theatre Festival in Baltimore (June 1978), a vigorous discussion emerged. Among the issues was whether, as Richard Schechner contended, experiences in paratheatrical events can be integrated into either the ordinary lives or theatrical work of the participants. Similarly, anticipating the end of the PPE, several participants broke silence to raise this very issue. They wanted to know how anyone could be satisfied with the "real" world after the intensity of the new one generated during the PPE.

The polarities between which the PPE swung were ecstatic transport in a closed space and loosely structured ambling through the public streets of a heavily industrialized, urban city. On the one hand, at least two participants, enabled to "fly" and brought down by others, entered what can only be called a trance-dance. And on the other, the entire group took a long walk at dawn across the city. Most of the activities were, of course, somewhere between these poles of intensity and diffusion, but whether intermediate activities can actually form a bridge is the basic question raised by Schechner and explored by members of the Lab. How can we integrate walking and flying?

Various ways of naming the goal of the PPE were mentioned by the Lab, among them, "getting rid of baggage," "authentic interaction," "finding 'It.'" Most of these terms, however, are excessively ideological or already clichéd. They ignore the exploratory tenor of the PPE, as well as the Lab's own tentativeness about what it was doing. The PPE was an experiment, and, as always in experiments, the experimenters were often uncertain both about what they wanted and unclear about the criteria for judging the results. The underlying goal seems to me to have been to achieve a climate which facilitated unpremeditated interaction, or, to put it another way, to enable participants to find the unnameable gesture, the most salient feature of which is that it emerges as a strictly "presentized" response, rather than arising from a plan or being provoked as a defense reaction.

Some participants spoke of the PPE as "unstructured." But a more careful scrutiny would have revealed that structuring was a constantly occurring process. Several principles engendered the basic ethos of the PPE: (1) Much of the work was done in silence and with minimal or no introduction. Actions were not framed for the participants by being named "performance," "workshop," "ritual," or "therapy." (2) Work continued around the clock with minimal time for sleeping, eating, being alone, and talking. (3) Leadership, except during exercises, was typically covert; effort was made near the end

to share leadership with participants. (4) Discussion of the event itself was forbidden both during and shortly after the PPE. (5) Physical and psychological demands were heavy; role-oriented expectations and socializing were light. (6) Acting, pretending, and stylization, as well as mindlessness, laziness, and introversion were gesturally, and sometimes verbally, discouraged. Attentive presence was cultivated.

Calling the PPE a "paratheatrical" event has limited usefulness. The term conceives such an event only in terms of its deviation from theatre. And in recent usage it has been associated specifically with the post-"poor theatre" phase of Grotowski's experiments. I usually speak of the PPE's conducted by Actor's Lab as "pararitualistic" partly because of the ritual studies perspective which I bring to my participant-observer study of its work, but also because I am convinced that the Lab's exploration of shamanism has implications for religion as surely as it does for theatre. Lab performances may use ritual as they use anything else, say, music or dance. But "the work," its form of actor preparation and "research," which informs workshops and public events, does not merely employ ritual. It is ritual, though not in either an orthodox or a sectarian sense. In the work the rhythms occurring both within and between participants are projected and pursued as a fragile, powerful, quasi-transcendent, elusive "It." When "It works," the language, logic, and gestures of Lab members are clearly recognizable in terms of what phenomenologists of religion call "mysticism." Mysticism in this technical sense does not denote obscurantism or secrecy but rather a disciplined bodily identification of the self with whatever is taken to be the constituent sources of energy and stability in the world. Mysticism is the search for simplicity and immediacy of access to power. People at the Lab have little interest in naming or expounding "It," so the ritual dimensions of the work are relatively disconnected from systematic exposition (theology), exemplary stories (mythology), and a symbolically articulated world view (cosmology), all of which are usually integral to traditional religions.

Specific studies done in the work are barely discussed at all, though they are carefully watched and notes taken. The Lab ethic, its set of values, oughts, and ought nots, is strong in the work room and takes the form of unsaid but strictly enforced rules about eye decorum, silence, nonjudgment, not disturbing each other's objects (more akin to relics than props), noncensorship of action, nonintellectualizing, and so on. The ethic carries over into PPE's, so in the language of religious studies a PPE is an effort to extend a ritual-ethic without the liabilities (or benefits) of a mythology, theology, and cosmology.

Kinesic congruence; the ultimate audience; finding a "third rhythm"

A distinctive feature of the Lab's ritual-ethic is its "kinesic congruence" (Schechner: *Essays on Performance Theory, 1970-1976*) its collective gestural and kinesthetic style. Words are particularly innocuous to convey it; film is needed. Nevertheless, some of its features are a wavelike circularity, birdlike or serpentine writhing, radiation of energy from central trunk outwards toward head and limbs, avoidance of localized or isolated movements, centering in the lower abdomen and pelvic region, decisive starts and suspended stops, spewed and relatively uninflected barrages of language alternating with unvarnished silence. Other supportive, but nonkinesic, characteristics of the Lab style are use of candle and shadow, simple musical sounds employing simple in-

struments, minimal costume, no makeup, small audiences, mythological themes, and roles that pay first allegiance to actor needs and values rather than the characterizations of playwrights or demands of a text. This ethical, rather than esthetic, approach to roles is the factor that leads directly to the nontheatrical, ritual explorations of the PPE.

The first meeting of the PPE was simply a gathering for no stated purpose of approximately forty people in a closed space. Initiative arose not from the Lab but from the participants, who presumably felt that singing, dancing, or talking could catalyze the action. The Lab responded only by listening and watching. Some participants did not know for quite some time who were Lab members and who were "the public." So mystification of leadership was at the very root of the event. The group dynamic of guessing who the leaders were and fantasizing about their secret purposes set in early.

In the face of an emerging, unnamed interaction among strangers who meet and, for a moment, go with one another without anticipation or regret, the dominant sensibility is one of mystery, awe, and fullness. But mystery is not mystification. Mystery happens when an opening, a revelation, if you will, occurs between people who meet with minimal pretense, but mystification arises when those in positions of power hide their own processes and uncertainties behind the trappings of ritualized separations. Both mystery and mystification were strong in the PPE, though only the former was intended by the Lab.

After the opening session participants soon learned who were Lab members by observing eye contact and rhythm patterns. While Lab people were identifying and implicitly criticizing actions imitated from acting schools, dance, martial arts, athletics, and other body-mind training sources, the participants were identifying, and beginning to imitate, the Lab's style of moving and interacting. Enough whispering passed during breaks that participants began a concerted search for the hidden criteria by which they imagined the few were to be chosen to work beyond the initial weekend. The assumption was that initiation was dependent upon competition to be judged by criteria known only to the Lab members. As a matter of fact, Lab people decided during the PPE not to make such a selection but to proceed by attrition. However, for a long time participants did not know this. So in trying to please some unknown, largely fantasized, attentively watching Lab members, the process called by Philip Slater "deification as an antidote to deprivation" set in. The Lab ensemble, because it wanted to facilitate, observe, and go with the initiatives of others, was experienced as an absent, but all-seeing, god (*deus absconditus*). It was sometimes experienced as the ultimate audience before whom participants tried to do without acting and whose will was to be discovered only by risk, trial, and error.

Implicitly, the PPE was a nascent subculture, a temporary "total institution." As in monasteries, prisons, religious retreats, and groups of tribal initiates, the PPE greatly reduced people's access to food, sleep, and social amenities in order to generate a simpler form of community. The lifestyle of this temporary community was typified by the symbolic poverty of simple food, the chastity inspired by lack of sleep, obedience to the group ethic, and verbal silence—a familiar ethos to students of monastic ritual. As a compensation the "the work," as Lab members call it, tended at times to be hyperkinetic, hungrily aggressive, gesturally erotic, occasionally rebellious, and musically noisy.

Several different kinds of events occurred : (1) preparatory exercises indoors and outdoors; e.g., leaping, leapfrogging, galloping, gamboling, and the Lab's adaptation of the plastiques; (2) entering and interacting in an open space—alone, in pairs, in small groups, as a whole group; (3) animated interactions; e.g., Lab people, using musical instruments, soil, water, wood or candles to create settings for actions and overtly "animating" (the Lab's term for inspiring, instigating, tempting, leading) participants to

find their own rhythms and spaces; (4) working bodily with "metaphors," verbal statements with which participants are asked to make a full, but nonintellectual, identification; e.g., "The river is my source and my sister."

Most of the events of the PPE required a dialetical split of attention and energy. In one, for example, we were asked to explore our own rhythms using simple instruments such as bells, drums, and blocks but to go with the flow emerging from first one subgroup then another. In another instance we entered a preparatory space, embodied a rhythm and then carried it to another space, allowing what we encountered in the second one to modify the way of moving we had begun in the first. In this way an escape into the duplicities of mere interiority of solipsistic fantasies was blocked. Musically, bodily, and socially, the PPE pressed people to discover some "third rhythm" (my term), the dialectical outcome of an interplay between the rhythms of two or more participants.

The problem of finding a "third rhythm" (or "narrow pass," as the shamans call it) in terms of which two persons can "go with" one another is a microcosm of the integration problem raised by Schechner and some PPE participants. How a big male and a small female or, more acutely, a large woman and a tiny man can learn to embody their own aggression in wrestling and tumbling without destroying the interaction, or how a slow runner can handle his feelings alongside a fast one without lapsing into competition or giving up, is precisely the same as the one of integrating the cultural rhythms of the "real" world and those of a temporary subculture such as the PPE. So the PPE did not avoid the issue; it miniaturized, and thereby incarnated, it.

Seers and doers; a return to the origins of walking

Group work during the Lab's PPE was elemental. Noticeably absent were athletic show and theatre games contrived to pick at psychological sores—two banes that haunt the edges of theatre and religion. Alongside what one reads of workshops and actor training in books like Schechner's *Environmental Theatre* (1973), the PPE was utterly cautious and full of decorum. I suspect this might have changed had the Lab pursued its original plan to move the final phase to a wilderness area of northern Ontario. And such a move might have romanticized the PPE by removing it from the harsh urban sounds and smells of Hamilton.

The PPE had no necessary connection with theatre, though most of its participants were interested in theatre, so they brought with them expectations appropriate to workshops. Of significance to theatre was the audience structure of "the work." Always, the work was watched by someone, though sometimes most of the group would be working with one or two "seers" (my term), while at others, most were watching the actions of one or two "doers." I say "seers," because at any moment an audience/congregation member might feel the moment right to become a doer, whereas "spectator" is usually a static role for a given event. And I say "doer," rather than "actor," because all forms of pretending, improvisation in the theatrical sense, and enacted fantasizing were discouraged. Playing could occur with approval, but not playing at play.

The PPE was an implicit critique of mimesis as a matrix for theatre and was an enacted claim that "interaction ritual," as Erving Goffman might call it, is a better foundation. Hence, the anthropology and sociology of theatre, along with the phenomenology of religion, are better methods than esthetics for articulating its dynamics and assessing its values.

Because of the strongly ritualistic, heavily archetypal style of productions by Actor's Lab, some assumed its paratheatrical work would be at best cultic, or at worst, occult. The PPE was neither. Despite the kinship of a PPE to an initiation rite, no secret gnosis was transmitted, though comments about the work and life-directions of participants were offered. And the injunctions to silence after the event had more to do with the Lab's reluctance to name actions too early for fear of warping or destroying them than with any desire to establish a hierarchy of elders in the know who initiate penitent catachumens.

But the PPE, it must be said, did—perhaps unwittingly—engender an expectation (1) of further community, and (2) of a formal initiation or conclusion that would allow the neophytes to peer behind the curtains, the strings of which were controlled by Lab people. The PPE was experienced by some participants as an incomplete initiation for at least two reasons. First, no ongoing structure after the PPE was available for participants. And second, initiation must be into either the Lab itself or the larger society. But the Lab could hardly support thirty or forty new members, and its disdain for the consumer-oriented values of modern urban society, which it views as the source of blockage to meeting and flowing, prohibited its taking Main Street, Hamilton, as a space of due sanctity for depositing its newly flexible and sensitized "public."

So a "Public" Participatory Event does not necessarily produce better citizens any more than it ordains priests of a new order of holy actors. Perhaps the Lab has more pedestrian concerns. The PPE allowed people to re-walk, a form of re-search. To return to the origin of walking can both feed and upset traditional theatrical, political, or religious institutions. Learning just to walk, as a Zen Buddhist pursues "just sitting," is at once a startlingly simple and terrifyingly difficult task. We must first be untrained.

A primary value of the Lab's PPE's, then, is its reducing our ways of moving to more elemental forms. The PPE engendered a transient subculture with a curiously simple, shared value, walking. I think walking is the best metaphor for the PPE, because even the flying of ecstasy took a perambulatory form. Human birds necessarily have feet.

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Piscator's *Rasputin*

by Christopher Innes

The theatrical flashpoint in the 1920's was Berlin. The aftermath of war, revolution and *putsch*; the increasing polarization of society; inflation and depression, which revealed the flaws in industrial capitalism; the example of Russia, which under Lenin still provided an ideal of heroic political action—all formed a creative ferment that found expression on the German stage with its traditional claim to be a "moral tribunal." The primary challenge was to develop ways of representing a new, distinctively twentieth-century perception of reality. As Brecht put it:

> *Just the grasping of a new range of material requires a new dramatic and theatrical form. Can we speak about finance in heroic couplets? . . . Petroleum struggles against the five-act form. . . . The dramatic technique of Hebbel and Ibsen is insufficient by far for dramatizing even a simple press release.*

The man who responded most directly to this challenge was Erwin Piscator. In 1927 Piscator acquired his own theatre, and his achievements during the single season (before inflation, libel suits following his productions, and the expense of turning his concepts into practical stage terms forced him into temporary bankruptcy) were radical and innovative enough to have a decisive influence on the development of modern drama.

Released from the restrictions of the Volksbühne—which dismissed him for altering a script, Ehm Welk's *Storm over Gottland*, without its author's approval and for subordinating "artistic" quality to overt propaganda—Piscator deliberately set out to create dramaturgical examples, models for playwrights to follow: "the literature that we need is only now coming into existence. We hope that our theatre will give it a powerful stimulus." One of his first steps was to form a "dramaturgical collective," which initially included Brecht, Walter Mehring, Erich Mühsam and Toller, and the program for the 1927-1928 season of the Piscator-Bühne is a clear indication of his intentions. Apart from two classics (*Troilus and Cressida* and *Woyzeck*), the other eleven plays listed were all premieres and fall into two groupings: plays with titles like *Economic Condition* (subtitled *Petroleum*) or *Wheat* (a study of stockmarket manipulation by Brecht that was never written but later formed the basis of *St. Joan of the Stockyards*), which were to deal directly with the forces governing society; and plays analyzing the dialectics of history in order to give an overview of contemporary events. Piscator's most influential productions—*Hoppla, We Are Alive!*, *Rasputin* and *The Good Soldier Schweik*—all fall into this second group and can be seen as a thematic unit, each presenting complementary aspects of revolutionary experience: the psychological effect of failure in the German November Revolution, the factors leading to success in the October Revolution, and the revolutionary catalyst of the World War.

> *After we had outlined a decade of German history [1917-1927] in* Hoppla, We Are Alive! *and the roots and driving forces of the Russian Revolution in* Rasputin, *we wanted to illuminate the whole system of war in the spotlight of satire in* Schweik.

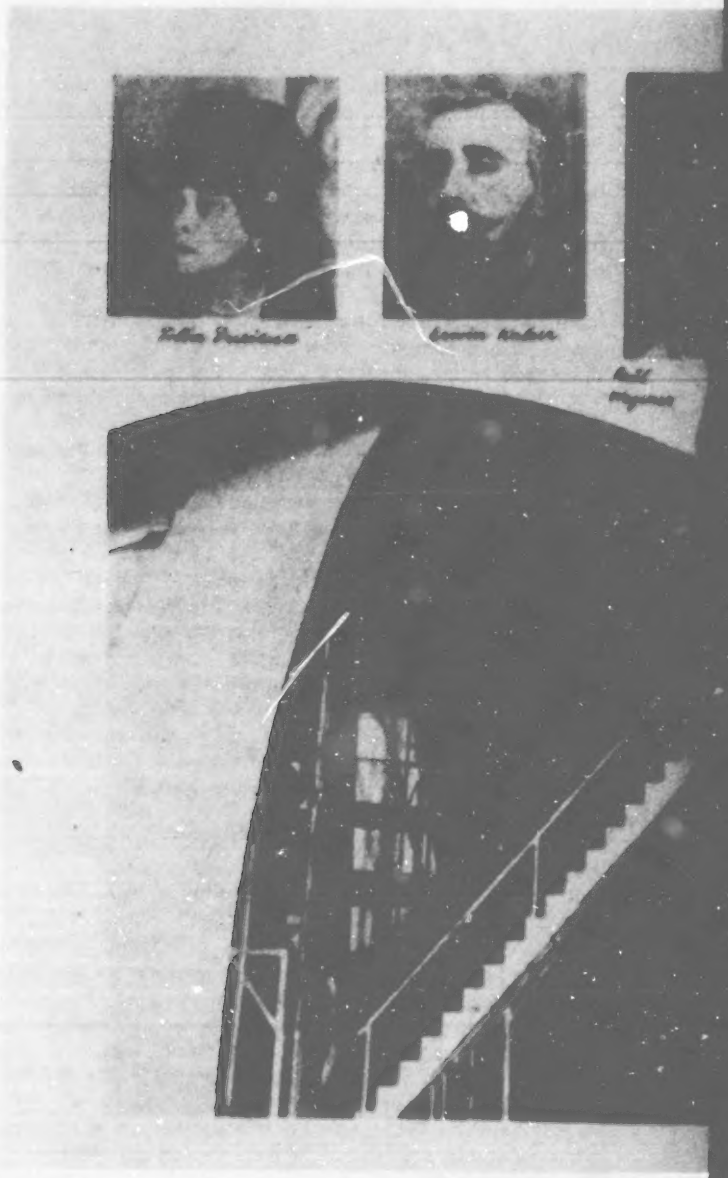
The title photograph is of the program cover from the original production of Rasputin.

The intrinsic problems raised by such subject material were well illustrated by a script commissioned from Wilhelm Herzog to open the Piscator-Bühne season. This was to have been a "political revue" encompassing the whole revolutionary period in Germany, but comprehensiveness was only gained at the expense of any coherent through line, and the weight of documentary detail necessary to establish the sequence of events could not be integrated in a dramatic action, while at the same time the level of generalization ruled out character development or conflict on an individual level. On the one hand dialog was reduced to summary stage directions—"And then an orgy followed" or "An exchange of witticisms"—on the other it was an indigestible recital of factual evidence, and Piscator rejected the play as unstageable and unsalvageable. But it was in overcoming exactly the same problems of scale and abstraction that he developed his new theatrical form, which reached its full expression in *Rasputin.*

The basic stylistic solutions—integrating film with the stage action, playing separate scenes simultaneously on clearly distinguished areas, and constructing a physical frame for the actors that gave a symbolic focus to the heterogeneous elements of the performance—had already been partially worked out in his earlier Volksbühne productions, and Piscator had demonstrated their success in *Hoppla!*, which he substituted for Herzog's revue. Reorganizing Toller's play to fit into a three-story structure with eight separate acting areas and revising the ending to make a clearer political statement, Piscator had used film sequences to expand the historical reference of the action and to link the scenes with current events. In effect he had turned a fairly conventional expressionistic play of personal crucifixion into a multimedia, multistage event. But in spite of the alterations, most of which were incorporated in the published text, Toller's play remained the study of an individual rather than the direct analysis of politics that Piscator wanted. The extension of the action from 1927 back through the ten years to the German Revolution had been limited mainly to a film prolog that was only indirectly linked to the play, and in spite of its critical success, Piscator looked on the *Hoppla!* production as still expressionistically subjective, "poetically lyrical" rather than "realistic" and "documentary."

Alexei Tolstoy's play on which the *Rasputin* production was based is far inferior to *Hoppla!* in dramatic quality—Piscator's description of it as "a sensationalist potboiler" is not inaccurate—and the alterations to the text were so radical that the production was truly an independent creation. When Leo Lania, Felix Gasbarra and the "dramaturgical collective" had finished, the number of original scenes had been cut to eight and nineteen new scenes added, while the number of characters was multiplied to a cast of thousands—thirty-one actors doubling to play fifty-six parts, plus "gypsy dancers, soldiers, people." Where Tolstoy's play had centered on Rasputin's influence over the Czar, court conspiracies, the melodrama of Rasputin's assassination and poetic justice in the form of the outbreak of revolution in March 1917, Piscator's production was the outline of an era. In each case the new scenes dealt with those points at which the global events between 1915 and 1917 intersected with actions of the characters so that the material added was not simply background but provided the motivation and indicated the repercussions of individual decisions. Local incidents and intrigues were set in the international context of industrial output and military strategies. The protagonists were turned into pawns of historical forces, and the general impression was of inexorably marching events, a net of complex circumstance seen from a double perspective: triumphantly affirmative for the anonymous masses, tragic for the individuals nominally in control of those events whose decrees were shown to be extempore responses.

The full title of the adaptation, *Rasputin, The Romanoffs, the War, and The People Who Rose Up Against Them*, not only indicates the extent to which the focus of the original play had been extended, but also outlines four distinct centers of interest: the



The centerfold of the original* Rasputin *program, showing stage construction and photographs of the principal characters.

study of political maneuverings for personal power in the portrait of an individual and his fate, the analysis of a ruling dynasty, a spectacular action that had effectively destroyed all existing political structures, and a group of faceless extras cast in the role of a historical force. By splitting the various strands of the action between stage and screen, Piscator managed to develop and interweave those divergent interests without losing either pace or clarity. Basically the stage portrayed confrontations between those figures whose positions had made their names (and faces) familiar—their personal and sexual situations, anecdotal stories—while film showed the masses in action—wider historical events, the world outside the wings. The ability to juxtapose different levels of reality, together with the visual emphasis of the production that came from using (silent) film to represent not just a scenic context for the characters but the decisive force in the action, made it possible to give such sociological abstractions as "capitalism" or "the class struggle" dramatic shape through a form of symbolism, focusing on the intrinsic meaning of events and not simply on the facts, which Piscator defined as "condensed reality . . . a method of stenographically abbreviating material."

When the curtain rose the audience was faced with a striking and unusual structure that almost completely filled the stage—a gigantic, metallic-colored half-globe. This was constructed out of curved frames of steel latticework covered with the stiff, smooth cloth used for the outer skin of zeppelins and painted in nonreflecting silver so that film could be projected onto its curved surface yet spotlights would not be refracted off it. The whole structure was 49 feet in diameter, 24½ feet high and weighed over a ton. It was fully mechanized, mounted on a revolve and divided into 12 internal sections ranging between two and four stories high, one above the other in each segment of the circle, with 14 different combinations of opening. The hinged segments of the outer shell that covered each section folded back like triangular doors, lifted up like trapezoid flaps, or could be flown, revealing the scene within. Each of the smaller areas contained a fixed set—the Czar's headquarters, Rasputin's study, the Winter Palace—and a 16-foot square cinema screen could be erected in the upper level of the globe when the central peak was raised and tilted back. In addition there was an eight-foot-wide screen running the full height of the proscenium at the right of the forestage on which a "calendar" of dates and events could be projected as if on a continuously rolling band. This too was mobile and could be moved upstage outside the sight-lines. Not surprisingly it took a crew of 24 stage hands to manage such a mechanically complex set, and, as might be expected, things sometimes went wrong in performance. But (as in almost all of Piscator's productions) the concept of the stage structure came first and everything else—plot, scope, perspective—was built around it. The image of the globe and its potential as an organizing principle had determined the way in which the script had been adapted, and its fluidity and movement were essential for handling such a panoramic subject.

The performance opened with a film prolog. Approximately eight minutes long, this was put together out of clips taken from feature films—among others, *The Black Eagle*, *Revenge Is Mine*, *The Czar's Ballerina*, *Ivan the Terrible*—and documentaries, in particular newsreels from 1910-1915 that the Russians had put together as a film on *The Fall of the House of Romanoff*, to show the spectator a complete overview of the emperors of Russia from the earliest centralization of power: a repetitive, bloodstained history of assassination and unsuccessful revolution, savage repression and luxurious decadence; a selection showing the continual presence of priests behind the throne to give the background necessary for understanding Rasputin's significance as the embodiment of a constant political factor, not a melodramatic historical aberration; a Macbeth-like line of princes leading up to the figure of Nicholas II, the last Czar. Here were stark contrasts of opulence and starvation; crowned heads alternated with repeated scenes of masses in revolt, beaten down, sabred, shot as the film advanced through the centuries.

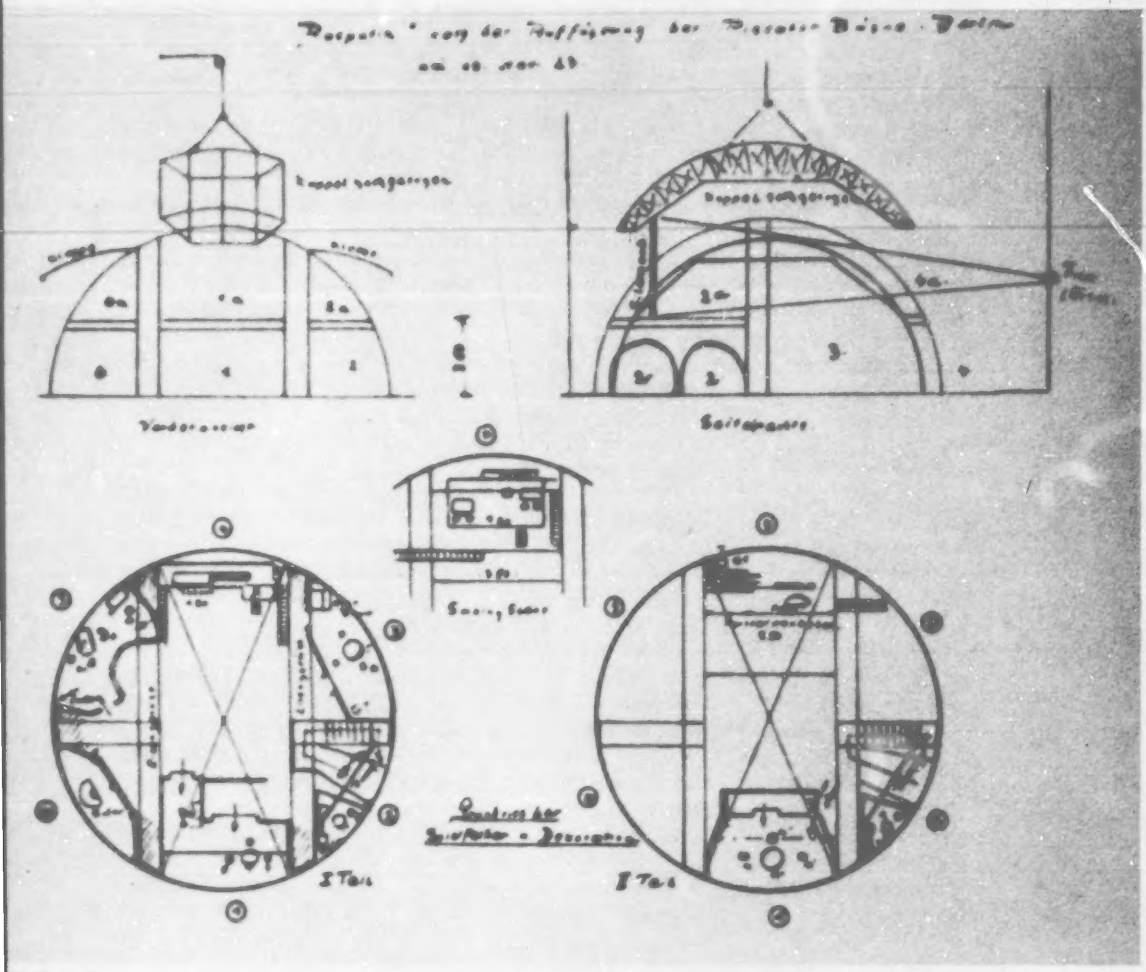


Diagram showing how globe changes between Part I and Part II.

They were given an ironic voice by the objectivity and apparent factuality of the camera. Beside each shot of struggling crowds, the "calendar" not only listed the date and names of the movements but made comments such as "failed to gain popular support . . . betrayed by their leaders . . . the soldiers had the guns"; while against each Czar's portrait was an equally laconic notation, "died suddenly in suspicious circumstances . . . stabbed to death . . . insane, died raving . . . committed suicide." Thus when the stage action began it was seen as the culmination of a historical process rather than a conflict between individuals or an individual viewpoint, while the swiftness and success of the revolution, which had seemed so unexpected and exceptional to European onlookers at the time, was revealed as the high-water mark of a long tide.

By using a technique developed for *Hoppla!*, Piscator was able to move from film to stage action without a break. Behind the screen, suspended from the flies and resting on the front of the upper acting area in the globe, was a black gauze, in front of it a white one. At the end of the film sequence the screen was flown, while a spot picked out the figure of Erwin Kaiser in the role of the Czar, who was standing immediately behind the screen and thus appeared to move out of the film, an all too human figure dwarfed by the huge threateningly gesticulating head and shoulders of Rasputin still projected on the gauze. The Czar's deliberately regal pose was thus revealed as empty play-acting by the image towering over him, the shadow of his fate that faded as first the black, then the white gauzes were flown and the scene began: the Czar turned to protest to his wife about her infatuation with Rasputin, to take leave of her on setting out for the battle front.

This integration of film and acting was a device applied to expand the frame of reference at key points throughout the performance, and the contrasts in scale and level of reality between screen and scene were used to condition the audience's response to the characters. The artificial nature of theatrical conventions was emphasized by the documentary nature of film, while at the same time its impression of actuality was transferred to the characters who were made up to correspond as exactly as possible to the appearance of the historical personages shown by the camera, and whose speeches were to a large extent well-documented quotations. As a result what appeared artificial was not the actors but the aristocratic society they portrayed, thus automatically creating a distinction between individuals and the class they represented. As characters they gained in credibility, while the film demonstrated that they were out of touch with reality (a point already made in advance in the program by extracts from a courtier's diary), so that their world with its attitudes and customs appeared anachronistic in the context of their photographic environment. At the same time the images on the screen were considerably larger than life, which underlined the personal nature of the stage action and the comparative insignificance of characters as individual people. As Piscator had intended, the center of attention was not "the private fate of Rasputin. However interesting the figure of the 'Starez,' our [thematic] basis must be historical material, not 'interesting individuals.' And this material is: The fate of Europe 1914-17."

The style of acting reinforced this impression. Piscator's aim may have been to create a "hard, straightforward, unsentimental" style of representation, based on "accurate clear movements, for which sport is the only training" and comparable to Meyerhold's Biomechanics. But even if simultaneous commentary from the "calendar" and screen enforced an "alienating" perspective on the audience, the actors' focus here was conventional and naturalistic. Thus the Czarina remained ostensibly unaware of the folly of her hopes, pathetically praying to the ghost of the dead Rasputin for advice, for example, while on the screen the regiments that had mutinied were already marching on the palace—though at one point in the production the effect of this juxtaposition (when the Czarina ridicules reports of revolution while the film showed her future fate at the hands of the successful revolutionaries and the shots of a firing squad rang out above

Below: Czarina ridicules reports of revolution while on film (above) her fate is shown at the hands of the successful revolutionaries.

The "Three Emperors Scene": Wilhelm, Nicholas and Franz Joseph.

her head) was so overwhelming that in each performance, as Tilla Durieux recalled, "I petrified in my role." Apart from such involuntary effects, the imaginary world of the actors remained formally enclosed, but the representation was no longer limited spatially or temporally to a single unit. The conventional dramatic structure of sequential scenes was replaced by a synchronous action in which the simultaneous presentation of contrasting images portrayed events from a complex perspective and gave the theatre some of the advantages of the novel in controlling the reader/spectator's judgment without resorting to the melodramatic oversimplification of agitprop: in particular the ability to alter the perspective, show a scene from more than one angle, or give independent viewpoints, thus making a satisfactory treatment of sweeping vistas of fact possible.

From the opening "intimate" gathering of those whom the traditional historian or dramatist would see (as they saw themselves) as protagonists, the scene moved to a working-class bar—designated in the director's book as "Scene of the Three Singing Russians"—in which the deprivation and suppressed resentment of the poor was expressed in a peasant ballad leading to an outburst of despair, the workers cursing the German Kaiser. On the screen, film of the victorious German offensive under Hindenburg and the destruction of the Russian 10th army, senseless mass charges of Russian regiments against machine guns in the Carpathians, and anonymous bodies in abandoned trenches graphically showed the reason for the court intrigues against Rasputin and the growing despair of the masses, while in counterpoint to the personal actions of the scenes the "calendar" gave a strategic overview: "March 1915 . . . Russian breakthrough in East Prussia unsuccessful . . . Przemysl fortress surrenders (starvation)

. . . French army corps holds the line (78,300 dead and wounded at Arras)." The cursing of the Kaiser formed an associative link to the next scene, the "Three Emperors Scene," where interlinked monologs compiled from public speeches and personal notations on official directives by Wilhelm II, Franz Joseph and Nicholas II both underlined the essentially identical, interchangeable nature of ostensibly opposed enemies and revealed these apparent power figures as the tools, of global economic interests (whose representatives, directors of Krupp, Creuzot and Armstrong, appeared three scenes later):

WILHELM: *Almighty, give Germany . . .*
FRANZ JOSEPH: *Our Father, incline to the people of Austria . . .*
NICHOLAS: *For the sake of Christ, grant Russia . . .*
WILHELM: *Russia, England and France are plotting against us to destroy Germany. Hussars! In the midst of absolute peace they have flung the torch of war . . .*
NICHOLAS: *And I? Do I count for nothing? The prime minister has done this, the prime minister has done that . . . Am I nothing? . . . I have ordered my General Staff to start the march on Berlin as quickly as possible.*
FRANZ JOSEPH: *I did not want it . . .*
WILHELM: *The guilt of this war is not mine. It is the stupidity and clumsiness of Austria, and it will be our downfall.*
FRANZ JOSEPH: *Nothing is spared me. Richly have I deserved it all . . .*
NICHOLAS: *Maybe a sacrificial offering is required to save Russia. I will be this sacrifice.*

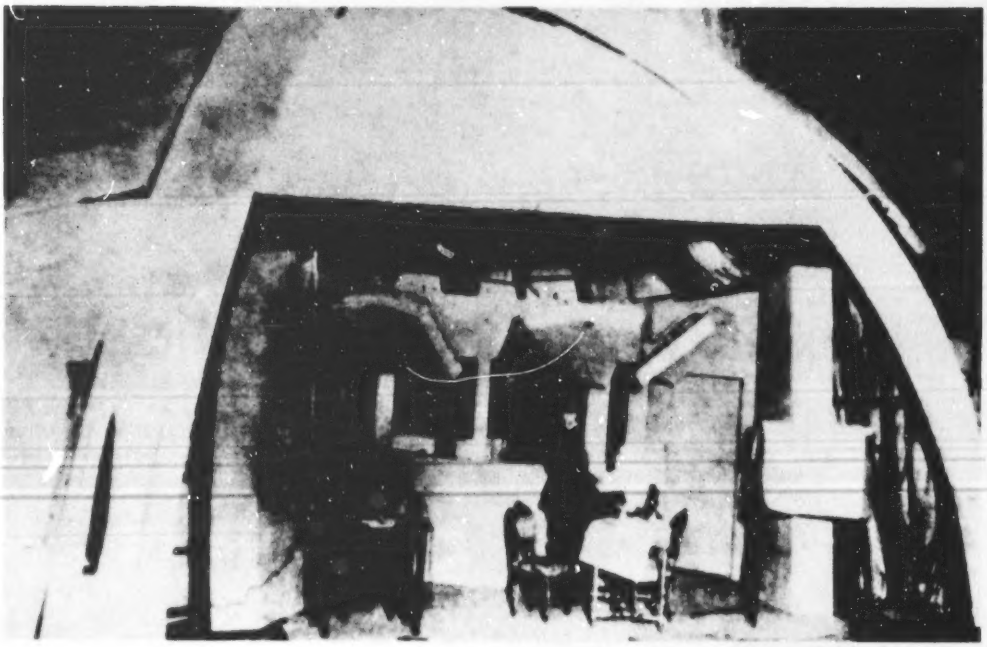
The effectiveness of this simple dialog and the way a straightforward presentation of the war years touched a nerve and still roused public passions a decade after the events is indicated by the reaction to this scene. Piscator received hate mail (a selection of which was printed in the program) accusing him of defiling the name Germany, while the ex-Kaiser started an action for defamation of character:

> *The mask by which the plaintiff is portrayed is unmistakable. The plaintiff is clearly associated with the [other] two emperors. The words that the author sets in their mouths express equivalent thought processes. In so far as the erstwhile Emperor Franz Joseph is presented as a complete idiot and the Czar Nicholas as a bigotted and characterless fool, one is forced to conclude that the plaintiff too is characterized in a like manner.*

In later performances, after Wilhelm had won an injunction against Piscator, Leo Lania appeared in place of Paul Herm, who played the Kaiser, and read extracts from this court judgment as a substitute for the original monolog. The effect, underlining the factual nature of the script and reinforcing Piscator's use of the material as a perspective on the present, not just as a historical reconstruction, as well as injecting ironic humor, was judged to be if anything more to the point than the original, and demonstrates the unifying force of Piscator's directorial concept, which could assimilate even such parenthetic material.

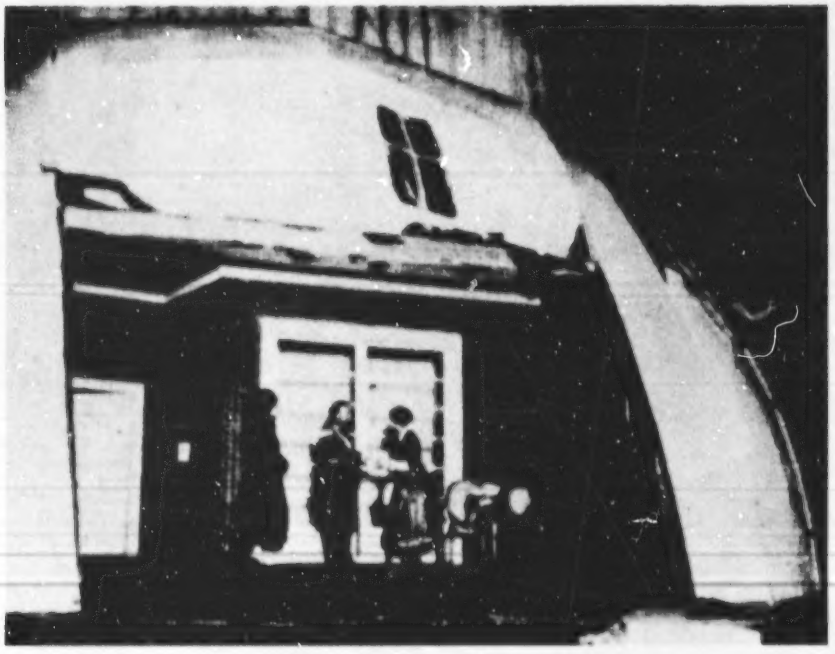
Swivelling like a tank turret from scene to scene, it was primarily the globe that provided this unity on the visual level. The world it symbolized was specifically modern, technological, with its visible interior latticework of girders, its functional flexibility and its obvious seams that hinted of industrial manufacture. On a Rorschach level of association, it set even nightclub and private-life scenes in the mechanized context of contemporary warfare, combining impressions of airship (the metallic fabric of the skin) and Maginot-line bunker (the flaps opening like gun-emplacements). It also doubled as a cinema screen, for example in the Foch-Haig scene that followed the dialog between the three industrialists. Here the generals stood on the upper level arguing over the strategy for a breakthrough with the aid of maps, while directly beneath their feet two film projectors showed the two sides of the front lines as on a split screen and their orders were translated into action by film of the Somme offensive. Piscator had worried that the hemispherical surface would distort a camera image unrecognizably, but in fact the curvature simply increased the sense of movement and three-dimensional depth of the film which, like most early documentaries, was somewhat crude and jerky.

The film not only illustrated, it contrasted—as did the "calendar" onto which captions, quotations, statistics were projected as well as the list of dates, battles and significant political events in the warring countries, creating various poles within the action which could be played off against one another. The film commented on the acted scenes, the verbal projections on the film, offering a multiple perspective and building thematic statements out of ironic oppositions. Thus in the "Three Industrialists Scene" the armaments manufacturers mouthed self-justifying propaganda slogans—"Es geht um die Rettung des deutschen Wesens . . . La démocratie et la civilization doivent être défendues. . . We fight for the liberation of the world"—while the film revealed their real motives and the ugliness behind their idealistic patriotism with photos of the production lines and blast furnaces and smoking factory chimneys of Essen's heavy industry.



The Czar and Czarina in the Czar's headquarters

In the Foch-Haig scene the perspective was more complex, using all three modes of presentation simultaneously, and the film depicted the murderous effects of the generals' grandiose plans while a text underlined the insanity of their superficially rational ideas by pointing out the futility of the slaughter: "Loss—half a million dead—gain 120 square miles" . . . almost two bodies per square foot. One scene later on the other hand, where the Czar in his headquarters divided his attention between issuing inspiring directives and flirting with a nurse (an episode from Tolstoy's original play), a quotation from one of his letters to the Czarina simultaneously not only undercut the emotional tone of the acting, presenting the Czar's pretended solicitude for his wife that contrasted with his actual philandering activities, but on another level served to condemn upper class attitudes to war, presenting the Czar's willful ignorance as almost obscene by the stark contrast between the photographs of Russian corpses on the screen and his words: "The life that I lead at the head of my army is healthy and has an invigorating effect." Apart from creating this satiric counterpoint, which made overt comment unnecessary, it was the use of film that allowed Piscator to extend the action from "the internal curve of [conventional] dramatic action" to "the truest and most comprehensive possible epic unrolling of the epoch from its roots to its final repercussions." One picture could communicate what it would have taken several minutes of dialog to express, and as photographs these pictures (on the principle that the camera never lies) also served to document and authenticate the action.



The Czar, Czarina and her confidante, Vyrubova

Within this "epic" structuring of the dramatic experience, where the sequence of the episodes was determined by the logic of global events, there was also a purely formal patterning: three Russian singers, three emperors, three industrialists, the unholy trio of Rasputin, the Czarina and her confidante. In addition there was a clear counterpoint between the different scenes. As the globe rotated and revolved, high life was set against low, the Czar's family problems against the fears of the masses; the emperors' declarations and regrets were balanced against the passion and determination of the revolutionaries in the next scene—Lenin's speech to the first congress of the Internationalists—which in turn was set in contrast to the machinations of the present ruler of Russia, Rasputin, to hold onto power. The globe swung round again and the cynical *realpolitik* of the three industrialists provided a parallel to the earlier emperor scene, undercutting the national figureheads, only to stand condemned themselves by the results of their pursuit of profit, the inhuman effect of their products, in the following Foch-Haig offensive. The globe turned again, setting the futile, destructive purposefulness of the generals beside the Czar's self-indulgent playing at war, with its equal price in lives, then contrasting these views from the top against the prospect from below in a monolog expressing the shell-shocked fear of a lone deserter. The same structure of opposition and comparison, parallels and polarities, ran throughout, together with a progressive emphasis on the revolutionary masses until by the final scene there were over fifty actors on the stage. The conventional significance and dramatic impact of Rasputin's drawn-out death agony, poisoned, flung into the ice-covered river, shot (the climax of Tolstoy's play), was put into perspective by the real political importance of the troops' mutiny, weapons flung aside, the election of a spokesman from the ranks to lead them back home. Petersburg society forgetting their troubles, maneuvering for personal position while watching a gypsy dance-group, was contrasted with a political meeting in a munitions factory and the outbreak of revolution, a car with a red flag waved through

its window hurtling through the streets, a telegram from the Czar to the Petersburg military commander: "I forbid disorders." By the final sequence, the social oppositions established in the opening scenes—the pride of those in authority, their egoistic absorption in personal status, and the misery of the masses—had been completely inverted. The Czarina's pathetic refusal to believe the seriousness of the situation and her attempts to summon up the spirit of the dead Rasputin symbolized the ruling-classes' total loss of contact with reality and self control. It led, through the film, directly into the final triumphant sequence of the Bolshevik coup against Kerenski's democratic provisional government, culminating in the rhetoric of Lenin's speech to the Soviet Congress in October 1917.

Piscator's ideal was "a theatre machine, as inherently technical as a typewriter," a use of technology that was to be emblematic of twentieth-century consciousness as well as making it possible for the stage to deal directly with the global significance of current issues. His stage manager's requirements, however, indicate some of the difficulties in putting his ideas into practice—"what we need is not a theatre . . . but a huge assembly-shop with mobile bridges, hoists, cranes, . . . practicable traversing platforms with which weights of several tons could be shifted around the stage at the press of a button"—and, indeed, it was seldom in the Piscator-Bühne productions that everything functioned as intended. For all its flexibility, the global structure was hardly the versatile, maneuverable, unobtrusively silent epitome of the technological age that Piscator had imagined. It creaked and rumbled at it revolved, so that at times the actors had to shout to be heard. Running repairs continually had to be undertaken during the performance, the opening flaps jammed as they were being raised or lowered, centrifugal forces limited the speed at which it could be turned, and Piscator wryly commented that Alfred Kerr's description of "a creepy-crawly tortoise of grey canvas" was "not altogether unjust." However, it still gave an impression of swiftness at it rotated. Indeed it must have seemed almost out of control at times, a world running amok—as in an early performance where one of the large flaps almost became detached as the globe swung round and only the quick action of a stagehand saved it from being flung out into the first rows of the auditorium—and on this level, paradoxically, the technical flaws even added to its effectiveness as an image. The reverberating ponderousness of its rotation, the rackety sense of insecurity would have been threatening, a vivid (if unintended) picture of a world falling apart, of men at the mercy of the machines created to serve them. In Piscator's theatre the state machinery was left deliberately unconcealed to represent the scientific and specifically contemporary perspective of his drama. Here the undesired intrusiveness of his machinery had even wider implications.

Such mechanical flaws, of course, were inseparable from the innovative nature of Piscator's work and, to some extent, even added to its excitement. They underlined that this was experimental theatre, a "search for the basic artistic, philosophical, social and political principles for human thought and action in our age," and formed an atmosphere of creative chaos that almost all critics conceded was electrifying however much they disliked his ideology. The overall effect, in fact, was so involving that things which would have destroyed the illusion in any conventional production went unnoticed, as Hans Reimann, a member of the dramaturgical collective, discovered when he purposely tested this in one performance:

> *hands in my pockets, I sauntered over the forestage. Right in the middle of a scene. In full lighting. Glancing neither right nor left, imperturbable, without haste. The astonishing thing was that the actors took just as little notice of me as the audience . . .*

Piscator liked to characterize his style as "epic"—scientific, objective, rational, documentary—but, as Reimann's experience shows, this "political theatre" was one of gripping, even violent emotion. Piscator's associates George Grosz and Béla Balàzs both commented on the "Dionysian" effect of his work, and Leo Lania's essay in the program to *Rasputin* emphasized the participatory aims of the production, reminding the audience that they were "not merely spectators, but participants in the great drama of the collapse of imperialism . . . they form *an undivided unity, one* piece of world history: *the theatregoer of 1927* and—*Rasputin, The Romanoffs, The War, and The People Who Rose Up Against Them*." The political rationale for this was a demonstration that no individual could remain neutral, that the revolutionary forces set in motion by the war were still operating in society. Indeed, the effect was not vicarious empathy, since the individualized characters were a relatively minor element—one of three competing poles in the production—and functioned more as symbols than figures with whom one could identify. The photographically accurate makeup of Alexander Granach as Lenin, for instance, was the visual embodiment of the spirit "of the politically aware proletariat, consciously working towards the Revolution." Rather the audience were caught up in the epic sweep of events—and most performances of *Rasputin* ended with the audience spontaneously joining in with the massed actors on stage when they sang "The International." According to the rather simplistic emphasis of the program, this kind of emotional affirmation was "the sole justification" for political theatre. Esthetic or mimetic qualities were held to be only relevant in so far as they contributed to "the effect. Awakening interest and enthusiasm for our political, i.e. *human* goals. . . . By itself it cannot change the power structure, but it can act as valuable preparation." And, following this criterion, Piscator judged this to be his most successful work in the twenties:

> *Of all my productions the "Rasputin"-drama had the strongest echo, the most unequivocal effect. . . it was here that I had the opportunity to realize my aims most strikingly and clearly. The motivation for staging this material as well as the purpose and form of the treatment were proved justified through the [political] response to the performance.*

At the same time the production was explicitly "intended as a dramatic prototype for the playwrights of the coming generation. On this level audience response or political immediacy is not only an inappropriate yardstick, but success is more difficult to demonstrate. Politics in the shape of the Third Reich intervened, and for almost a generation avant-grade theatre in Germany ceased to exist. To some extent the "global stage" became the hallmark of Piscator's style, and he reused it for his adaptation of H. H. Kirst's novel, *The Officers' Uprising*, in 1966, but no plays have been specifically written for such a structure. However, Brecht's theories of epic theatre and the principles behind some of his techniques clearly derive from his experience in the Piscator-Bühne, while there is at least one instance in which the *Rasputin* production seems to have borne fruit: Joan Littlewood's *Oh What a Lovely War*, where precisely the same counterpoint of photographs/statistical-commentary/acted scene was used, and there were exact equivalents to the Foch-Haig and arms manufacturers scenes. The direct influence of Piscator here can hardly be doubted, since two of the other scenes are taken word for word from the Brecht/Piscator version of *Schweik* that followed *Rasputin*, although the minstrel show setting and the use of songs owe nothing to Piscator. Even without this actual borrowing, however, such an overlap might be expected where two directors share the same approach—and indeed the 1945 Manifesto of Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop had reaffirmed Piscator's basic premise: Only by using "the most recent scientific and technical developments can we create a theatrical form sufficiently flexible to reflect the rapidly changing twentieth-century scene."

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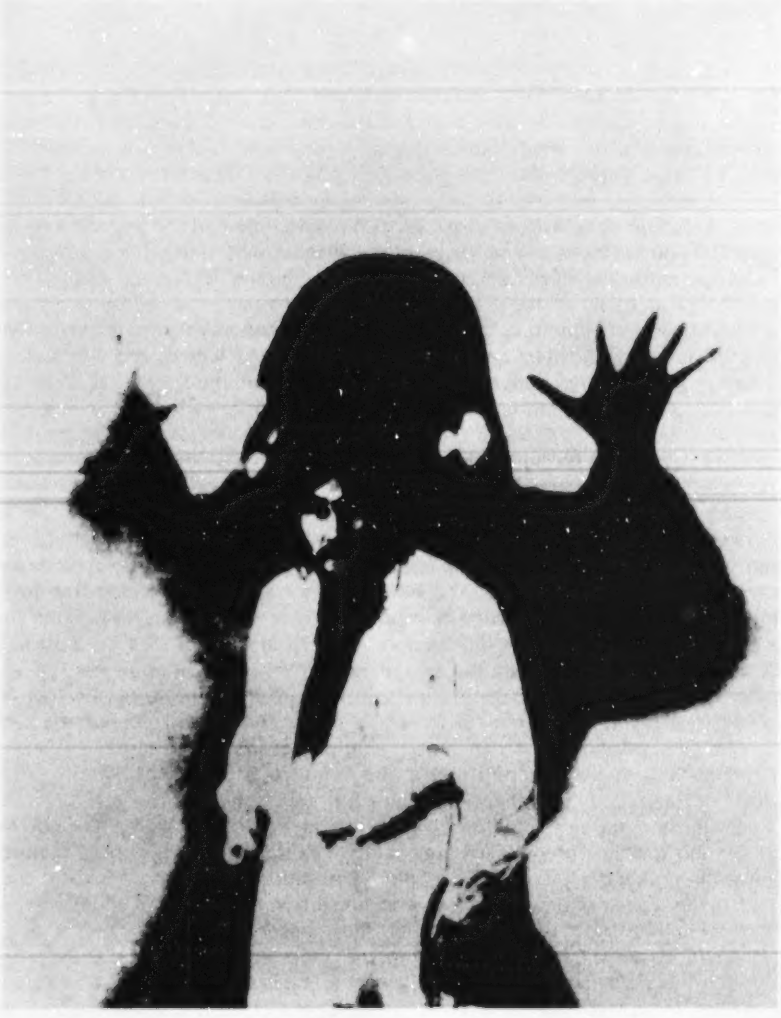

Rasputin:

A Technical Recreation

by Marianne Mildenberger

The following is an attempt to reconstruct the total course of a performance of *Rasputin*, with special consideration to the technical data. *Rasputin* is the single production of the Piscatorbühne for which such a reconstruction is possible with certainty, making use of available material which has been preserved. Serving as support are the sketches by Erwin Piscator from his book *Das politische Theater*; an essay by Julius Richter, the technical manager of the Piscatorbühne (*Rasputin/Nach der Aufführung der Piscator-Bühne* in: "Die Scene" 1928, Nr.2, p.40f); notes on the technical course of "Rasputin" made by the technical office of the Piscatorbühne (*Rasputin.* Notes on the technical operation. Theatermuseum Clara-Ziegler-Stiftung. München) and various reviews of the production.

At the beginning of the play, the hemisphere, with the playing areas set for the first part, is completely closed. At the sound of a gong, the stage, with closed dome, revolves a half turn to the left. From above, projection is begun onto the sphere; all other light is extinguished. As long as the curtain is open, the calendar is pushed forward at the portal.

The stage revolves further. At the same time, the middle part of the dome is raised four meters. The stage comes to a stop at playing area one, one of the two largest stage sections for the first scene. Above is the raised part of the dome, from which a screen is rolled down over area one, onto which, after removal of the slides, the first didactic film appears, projected in reverse from the back of the stage. This film shows a geneological sketch of the House of Romanov, portraits of the Czars, upon which the calendar comments: "dies suddenly," "dies in insanity," "dies by suicide," etc. This film is assembled from segments of various feature films. At the end of the row of portraits of the Czars, a spotlight focuses on the living figure of the last Romanov. He appears on platform 1a, located above playing area 1 in front of the screen, as the film fades. Nicholas II, laden with the tragic burden of his House, has already become a symbol. Beside him enters Rasputin, whose filmed "shadow" grows on the screen to over-sized proportions. (It is to be assumed that a film negative is being used here, since the "shadow" of Rasputin is a light contour against a dark background.)

Following the appearence of the two central figures of the drama, the notepad is moved in, and a white screen is lowered into the portal, on which a three-minute film illustrates the preconditions of the Revolution. The short pictures show poverty, hunger, serfdom, tyranny, war and suppressed rebellions up to the historical situation of 1915. The film ends with the needless attack on the masses by Russian regiments in the Carpathian Mountains. As the film is ending, the upper dome is lowered and the inset is opened in front of playing area 1, where the first scene is performed. It is taken from the original play, set in the room of Wyrubowa, the Czar's confidant, in Zarskotje-Selo.

Following this scene, during the short time in which the scenes change, slides are projected onto the dome, the calendar is pushed forward and then retracted. The stage revolves to playing area 6 (counterclockwise, that is, left of the audience's view of playing area 1). During this time, the hatch of segment 6a (above 6) opens, where the following scene, in a suburb of Petersburg, is inserted. This scene expresses the desperate mood of the masses, the mounting revolutionary wave following the military failures of the Russian army in the Spring of 1915. Meanwhile playing area 1 is closed. The scene ends in song, with a curse on Kaiser Nicholas II by the desperate workers.

After this, the hatch closes, the stage revolves. During the rotation, a film is projected onto the dome from behind the audience. On playing area 2, two lower and one upper segments open: the setting for the Three-Kaisers scene. In one of the lower

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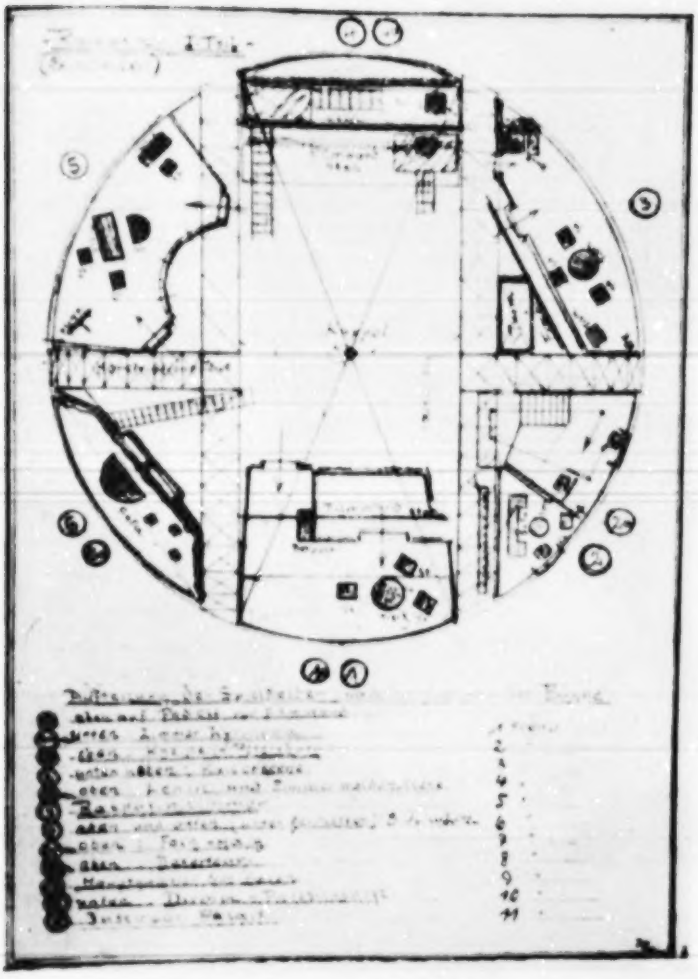
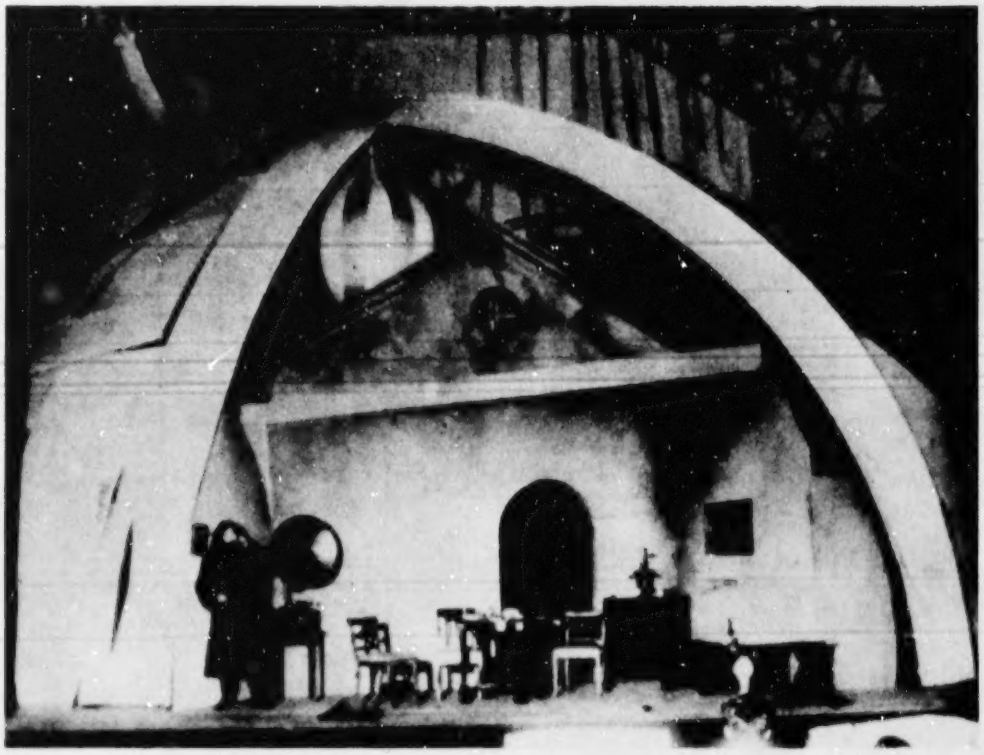
Excerpted from Film and Projection on the Stage *by Marianne Mildenberger, (Verlag Lechte, West Germany), 1961.*



Ground plan, Part I

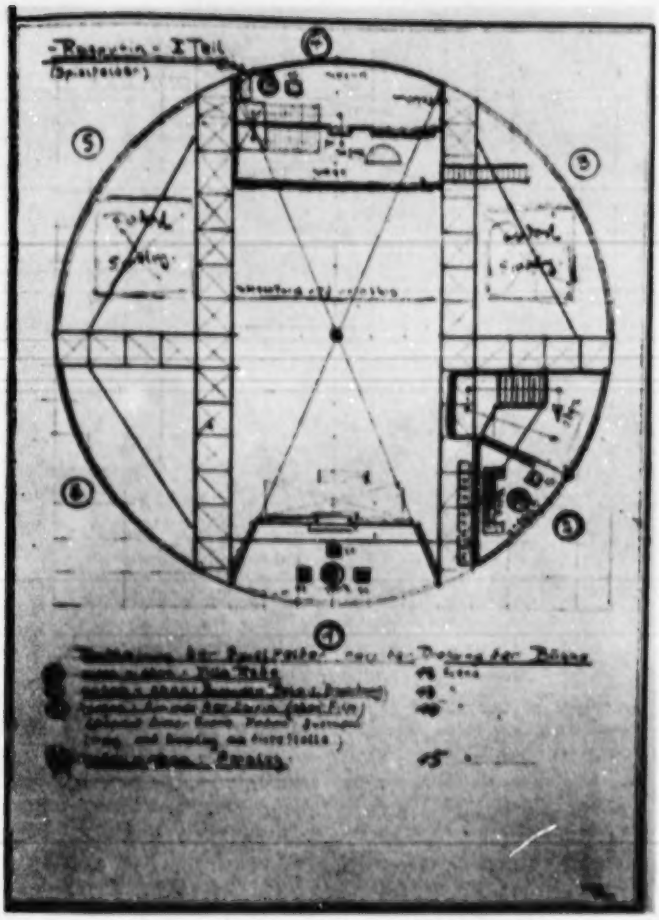
niches appears Kaiser Wilhelm II, in the other Franz Joseph, above, Nicholas II. This scene, written by Leo Lania and based on historical documents, shows Europe's leading monarchs as representatives of economic powers, and as dependent puppets in the service of the ruling economic interests of their countries.

After the Three-Kaisers scene, the running script appears again on the calendar, then the large hatch 2a opens in the upper part of the sphere. The fourth scene "Lenin in Zimmerwalden" is performed on this surface. It shows the First International in Zimmerwalden in March of 1915 and is a montage of excerpts of the speech Lenin gave there.



During the scene, playing area 3 is opened; the calendar appears with text. The stage revolves slowly toward playing area 3. During the rotation, the dome is raised and is positioned diagonally to the portal. Behind the walls of "Rasputin's room" on playing area 3, built the entire height of the hemisphere, a tower with a bulbous roof is pushed forward, which signifies the Russian surroundings. This scene, present in the original play, provides the first appearance of Rasputin. In the foreground left stands a telephone, his favorite toy, of which he makes abundant use. (Playing area 1 is dismantled during this scene.)

The calendar with text is pushed forward, the stage rotates toward the closed playing area 4 in the lower part. With the rotation, the raised dome turns around, so that the screen built into it hangs now over playing area 4 (the second largest area) and can be rolled down. At this point the three films begin: above, on the screen and below on the closed playing area 4. The three films, running simultaneously, show pictures from the war of March, 1916, something resembling Russia's attempt to penetrate between Duma and Beresina. The setting of the uppermost film is a cruiser. Immediately follow-



Ground plan, Part II

ing is a film of the "Three Industrialists," representatives of the munitions-works of Krupp, Creuzot and Armstrong. This film is in contrast to the previous one that showed the reality of battle, and is supposed to symbolize the powerful forces on the sides of the Germans and the Allies, which prolong the war out of actual economic demands. Their short exclamations "It is for the salvation of all things German," "Democracy and Civilization have to be defended," "We fight for the liberation of the world" are satirically contrasted with the smoking forest of Essen and the smokestacks of heavy industry behind them.

Taking place next on the upper stage area 4a, in front of the screen, is the seventh scene—the meeting between the two allied commanders-in-chief, Foch and Haig, at the

Film In *Rasputin*

In the play *'Rasputin'*, the premiere of which took place not long ago in Berlin's Nollendorf Theatre, film was employed as a necessary complement to the stage action and both film and stage were united. The management of the Piscatorbühne requested my advice on the undecided optical questions, and I had the task of creating, in a hurry, possibilities for the execution of the film projections considered necessary, in order not jeopardize the theatre performance.

The decor of the play consisted, as is well known, of a large hemisphere covered with linen. This globular screen was to be a projection surface. It was desired that in one instance a single film would fill the entire hemisphere and further, that two different films would be shown simultaneously on the spherical surface. With multiple projection, it was planned to show three films at the same time, two of which would be shown, as mentioned, next to one another, with their common sides overlapping somewhat, during which a third film, projected in reverse image from the back of the stage, would become visible on top of the other two films. This film had to be projected on a special surface, a surface that was attached to the inside of the hemisphere and exposed by raising the upper section of the hemisphere. Moreover, a small strip of screen was stretched on the right side of the stage as location for the illustrative textual explanations running throughout the course of the action.

In order to carry out this task, two projectors were installed next to each other behind the audience, for the usual projection of the film over the heads of the public. These two projectors were swivel-mounted on columns with which changes in the height of the instruments could be easily undertaken.

The use of film in* Rasputin: *above, Rasputin's shadow projected behind the figure of the Czar; opposite, the Czar in the last shot of the prolog.

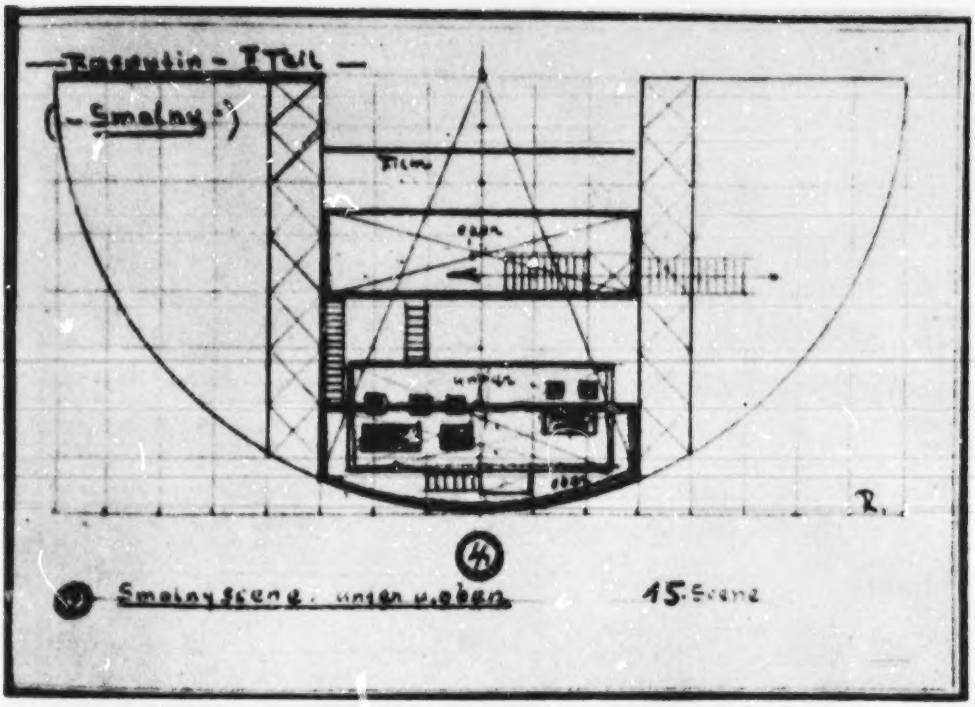
One of the projectors projected the film onto the entire hemisphere. The other projected the explanatory text onto the respective screen. During simultaneous projection, both machines were adjusted, reducing the size of the images.

Since the surface was spherical, I ordered a lowering of the projector for single projection, so that the upper parts of the picture, particularly important for the understanding of the play, would not appear too distorted by the highest point of the hemisphere. The lower parts of the picture could be neglected since they were less important to the overall effect and could even be allowed to drop out of view without disturbance.

A simple machine was used for the reverse projection from the back of the stage. It was constructed at such a height that the light could reach the screen without being disturbed by stage construction.

In order to maintain a uniform film speed when all three projectors were running simultaneously, the greatest attention by the personnel was required. The speed of the film had to be controlled from time to time by use of a clock that was attached to each projector. Otherwise a special timing device was used that connected the two machines located behind the audience and the machine behind the stage, and which permitted a common speed control. Further, as an important innovation, I had a special filter, in the form of a plane-parallel glass of a particular shade, inserted in front of the projector's lens in the path of the light. For those of the audience who sat directly before the stage and who occupied the most expensive seats, this allowed an advantageous view of the film. This type of filter increased the contrast of the image and made possible a less tiring, smoother viewing.

—Günther Loeck, "Die Filmprojektion in Theaterstück 'Rasputin' ", film supplement of the 'B. Z. am Mittag'—Steinfeld Archive.



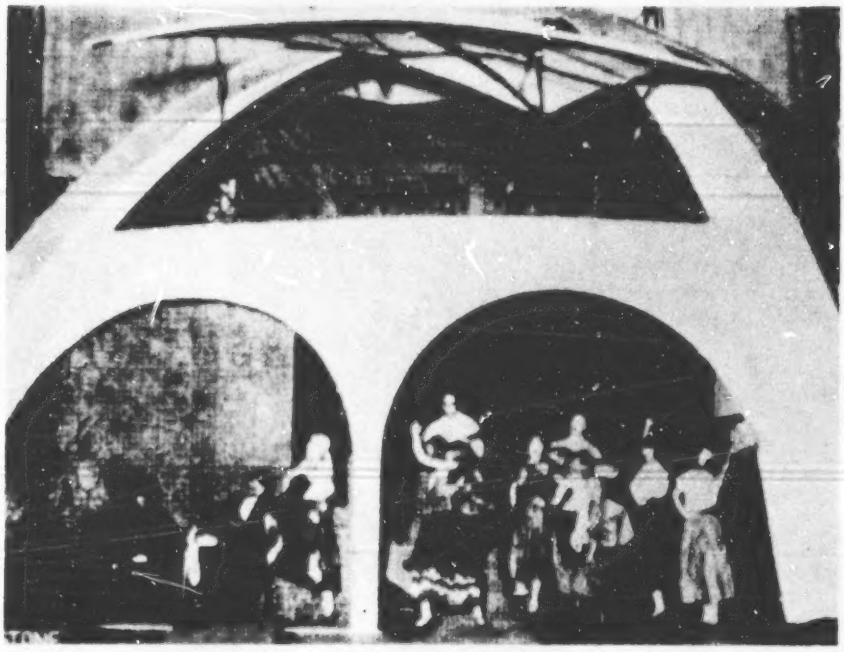
Ground plan, Part II, Scene 15

time of the diversionary Somme offensive. The film shows the massive attacks of the Battle of the Somme; projected onto the picture is the commentary: "Loss--half a million dead; Gain—300 square kilometers."

The eighth scene, performed in the same area and accompanied by film, is the monolog of the deserter, with a short text conceived by Brecht, Lania and Gasbarra in ten different versions. This text is supposed to characterize the war-weariness of the Russian forces during their last invasion. (During this scene, playing area 5 is opened.)

The film ends, the dome is lowered, the calendar appears with script, the stage turns slowly to playing area 5, on which the third scene of the original play, "Headquarters of the Czar," is played. The transition to this scene is provided by the calendar with text: "The Czar appears at the Front in order to lead his army." As the action takes place in the Czar's headquarters, pictures of the Russian Front are projected onto the dome, which alternates with sound film in which the zeppelin attack on the headquarters is portrayed. (In the meantime, playing area 4 is opened and prepared for the tenth scene.)

After the headquarters scene, the stage slowly darkens, the slides on the dome change, the stage rotates to the right to playing area 4. Once this is done, the slides fade, and the scene "Duma-Pureschkewyz," which has also been added to by the drama-collective of the Piscatorbühne, follows. (During this scene playing area 5 is closed and area 6 is opened.)

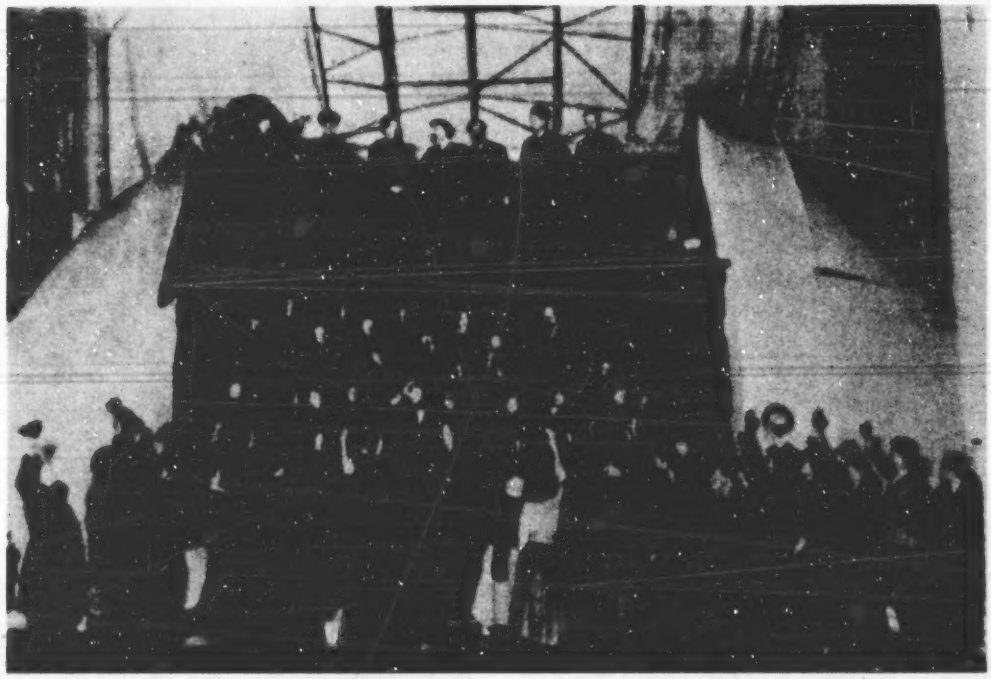


The Czar entertaining himself in the gypsy tavern.

After this scene, the stage slowly turns, past the closed playing area 5, to area 6, while a film is projected onto the globe from behind the audience. The eleventh scene, "The Iussupow Room," in playing area 6, ends the first part of the evening. Following the scene, which presents the first plans for Rasputin's murder, the curtain falls.

During intermission playing areas 1 (Wyrubowa's Room), 3 (Rasputin's Room), 4 (Duma) and 5 (Headquarters) are dismantled. They are replaced on 1 by the Czarina's Room, on the upper and lower levels of 4 by the Iussupow Palace. Playing areas 3 and 5 remain empty. The stage-wagons for the Smolny scene will enter here. The dome is closed, as are all entrances other than 2 and 2a.

At the beginning of the second part, the stage, positioned at playing area 6, revolves. The singing of the gypsy chorus is heard. The stage, hatches open, turns to playing area 2; the setting of the twelfth scene is "Villa Rode." Playing area 2 is divided into two parts by two large Roman arches. The scenery for the Petersburg pleasure-palace, which includes the upper playing area 2a, was set up during the Three-Kaiser scene behind the small niches opened for the rulers. In the gypsy tavern of the Villa Rode, where Rasputin amuses himself in the company of the lady-in-waiting, Wyrubowa, with wine, song and dance and beautiful women, Prince Iussupow presents him with an invitation to his palace, where Rasputin will be murdered.



Lenin's speech on the occasion of the second Soviet Congress.

The calendar appears after this scene, the stage turns across playing area 3 to area 4, during which the middle section of the dome is raised. The thirteenth scene, "Iussupow Palace," plays in areas 4 and 4a, where a glass wall appears. The murder of Rasputin in the Iussupow Palace ensues, preceded by involved preparation (the saturating of cakes with poison, poisoning the wine, etc.). The monk's strong constitution defies the poison, two bullets still do not kill him, he dies only as his body is thrown under the ice of the Newa. This last phase of the murder is shown on film, which is projected from the back of the audience onto the closed surfaces of the playing areas and follows the Iussupow Palace scene as the stage revolves across playing areas 5 and 6 to area 1.

The upper dome comes to a halt, positioned so that the built-in screen faces forward at the portal. It is rolled down over the upper part of playing area 1, marking the beginning of the fourteenth scene, "the Czarina's Room." During this scene the calendar is rolled forward, a text moves up it. In part, the scene is accompanied by film on the screen above: As the Czarina begs Rasputin's ghost for advice, the revolutionary regiments are already marching to Zarskoje Selo. A dream of the Czarina appears on the screen, which is lowered forward of the portal; the lights fade on the playing areas as this occurs. After the film, the screen is raised, the calendar disappears, the scene

continues. On the screen above the scene, a film is shown that gives a view into the future: The Czarina, who is still attempting to entreat Rasputin's spirit, is confronted in the film with her coming fate, the execution of the Czar's family. (As this fourteenth scene is performed, the Iussupow Palace is taken down in playing area 4, and, in its place, the platforms stored in areas 3 and 5 are brought in for the Smolny scene.)

After the fourteenth scene ends, the screen is again lowered in the portal; a film from behind the audience shows the outbreak of the Revolution, mutinous troops, discarded weapons, a red flag on a car racing by, etc. The stage, meanwhile, revolves across areas 5 and 6 to playing area 4; the upper dome comes to a stop. The screen in the portal is raised, the film continues running on the hemisphere's surface, the screen in the dome descends.

The fifteenth scene, "Smolny," plays on the upper and lower sections of area 4. Film is projected onto the dome throughout. This scene, added in the adaptation, shows the events from the outbreak of the March Revolution to the takeover by the Soviets in October 1917. During this scene, the screen in the portal is lowered, the light fades; on the screen the "Sailor's Scene" is shown, which reveals the events following the Kerenski episode (sailors of Kronstadt seize power of the government in Petersburg, the proclamation of the Republic). The scene continues after the film, during which film is projected from the rear of the stage onto the dome's screen. The scene ends with the large Revolutionary Assembly and Lenin's speech on the occasion of the second Soviet Congress. At the end, the dome is lowered, actors and public sing the "Internationale," and the curtain falls.

The production of *Rasputin* was a considerable success with the public and was able to be performed uninterrupted for almost two-and-a-half months.

The many difficulties that came about during the completion of the stage can be gathered from the calculations of the technical office of the Piscatorbühne concerning man-hours and hours of work. Setting up the stage, for example, with the various changes that were necessary, required 1690 man-hours, of which 1050 were overtime by the entire technical staff. To finish the work, 16 men were occupied for 24 consecutive hours. For the completion on the stage, a total of 4516 hours was required. Covering the playing surfaces and the dome took 246 man-hours; 1122 square meters of material were needed.

A great part of the film was put together from existing material, which explains the negative effect caused by these films' differences. In the search for suitable material, 100,000 meters of feature film and a great number of newsreels, cultural and nature films were screened. Many sections of a Russian film put together from old newsreels, "The Fall of the House of Romanov," were used.

Translated from German by Edna McCown

Letter to the Editor

To the Editor:

. . . I give you my impressions of "The Theatre of the Miraculous" by Mel Gordon, which appeared in the June issue of *The Drama Review*. It is not Mr. Gordon's sincerity that I question, but his pursuit of the facts. It would have been possible for him to talk with people who knew Gurdjieff, who are now actively participating in his work, and could even have given him photographs taken considerably later than 1924.

Well, shall I begin at the end? The article finishes with the statement that Gurdjieff's exercises are enacted only in private by small groups of individuals.

But this is not so. There are many thousands of people now studying the Gurdjieff movements throughout the Americas, Europe and Australia, and I have myself participated in, supervised or witnessed large public demonstrations in New York City, Toronto, Boston and Washington, D. C. From his derogation of the event, it is clear that Mr. Gordon was not present at the two full-sized demonstrations at the Fashion Institute in New York in 1961.

What is more, documentary films have been shown at the Museum of Modern Art, Lincoln Center, many Broadway theatres, and on the Toronto University campus before large audiences.

It is difficult to understand why Gordon failed to talk with people at your own university who could have given him their impressions. Professor Joseph Campbell, the distinguished mythologist, may not be on the staff of New York University, but his wife, Jean Erdman, who teaches the dance there, has with her husband seen many movements films. Anne Fremantle, historian, who recently gave a course at NYU on the history of mysticism, has taken classes in movements.

While we are on this subject, the public at large will certainly get a glimpse of movements in the film, "Meetings With Remarkable Men," directed by Peter Brook, which is soon to be shown in New York. It is strange that Gordon missed that front-page article about it in the theatre section of the Sunday *New York Times* a few months ago.

Again there is reason to question his thoroughness when it is obvious that he has used chiefly the well-intentioned, journalistic hash that Kathleen Speeth has made out of the books of Ouspensky, Walker, Bennett and Nott. He accepts her dubious instructions as authentic. He credits her with reconstructing "major" movements. She has not done so for the simple fact that she does not know them.

Kathleen, whom I have known since her birth, was one of the children between seven and eleven years of age who were invited to a party Gurdjieff gave in late 1948. That no doubt influenced her. Later, she was for a short time part of a beginners' group at the Gurdjieff Foundation, and took part in movements classes until her departure for California. Her introductory paperback on the Gurdjieff teaching would be more useful if she had taken the trouble to correct her mistakes in spelling, in dates and, unfortunately, in her "transcriptions."

It seems necessary to speak of this chief source of Gordon's information because he failed, unhappily, to talk with people who knew Gurdjieff. Jessmin Howarth, for example, who has taught the Gurdjieff movements since 1924 both here and abroad, could have given him much material and even some photographs instead of all that old stuff that has appeared everywhere.

Contrary to Gordon's statement that after 1924 Gurdjieff lost interest in the movements, the fact is that in 1939 in Paris he worked with many young French people, created scores of new dances, and in 1948 brought them to New York where night after night hundreds of people worked under his direct instruction. Gordon might also have learned something of the work of Jeanne de Salzmann, with whom Gurdjieff at his death left the continuation of the teaching.

Are you, as scholars, really interested in truth, however dull, or has journalism (my own profession) so debased us that we surrender to sensationalism because it makes a good story? As one who was brought up to admire the integrity of scholars, I am about to accept disillusionment with them as I read inaccurate, self-serving books and articles about the Gurdjieff teaching and the man.

The two main arms of the Gurdjieff teaching are the ideas and the movements. There are other forms, but these two require cultivation if the teaching is to be understood and lived.

In these Aquarian days, it should be more possible than it was in my youth to realize that head information is not enough; intelligence of feeling is necessary, and does not grow like dandelions on journalistic terraces. Articles and books, even good ones, are not enough. It is difficult to articulate direct experience.

Those of us who have been studying this teaching for many years are probably labeled "private" because we do not proselytize. Enthusiastic converts are not what we need, but we welcome people of intelligence, skepticism and conscience. Otherwise an ancient esoteric teaching, in its requisite twentieth-century dress, may be turned into the moonshine that deceives ardent readers into believing that they know who Gurdjieff was and what he taught.

In the meantime, dear editors, hear my prayer that academic journals undertake more accurate investigation, even if the result is less astounding, but more in keeping with the study in depth of what our ancestors once knew.

With best wishes,
Louise Welch

Mel Gordon replies: When the editors of The Drama Review *began to plan the Theatre of the Occult and Bizarre issue (T78) almost one year ago, it occurred to us that we might receive a number of strange, hysterical, or crank replies to various articles. While Louise Welch's letter-to-the-editor doesn't exactly fall into any of those categories, her tone and logic as expressed in the above letter is not just disturbing but mystifying: nearly her entire response is taken up with criticizing an imaginary article, certainly not something I wrote or ever intended to write.*

First of all, my piece "Gurdjieff's Movement Demonstrations: the Theatre of the Miraculous" concerned itself exclusively with G.I. Gurdjieff's *actual work in the theatre, which ended in 1924. The article was not about the much later activities of Gurdjieff's disciples, Peter Brook's, Louise Welch's, those of her friends, or psychological competitors. My intention, which, I believe, was quite clear, was not to teach, expose, ridicule, or proselytize Gurdjieff's* movements *or personal philosophy, but rather to look at his work from a performance and actor-training point of view. This is something that has never been attempted before in the theatre world.*

I am accused, however, in Welch's letter of having "missed" a feature article in the New York Times *on Peter Brook's newest film* Meetings With Remarkable Men, *based on Gurdjieff's early travels at the turn-of-the-century. Of course, I didn't "miss" it. But what does it have to do with Gurdjieff's 1923-1924 theatre productions or my article?*

Welch also accuses me of having "used chiefly" Kathleen Speeth's book The Gurdjieff Work *as my source material for the article. Although it's obvious to Welch, in fact it is not true at all. Of the over two dozen primary published or unpublished sources I consulted for the article, none included Speeth's writings. Why? Because Kathleen Speeth, like Louise Welch, was not with Gurdjieff in the years 1915 to 1924 when he was preparing or staging performances. Naturally, I limited myself to using only first-hand accounts and descriptions.* The Drama Review *is not usually interested in reinterpretations and opinions as much as in descriptions and documentations of the original*

performance work. It is for this reason that we did not publish photographs "that were taken considerably later than 1924" as Welch suggests we should have.

Louise Welch does bring up two facts that I was unaware of and which are more interesting than the rest of her letter. She points out that in 1939, fifteen years—not twenty-five, as I had written—after his accident, Gurdjieff returned to some limited work on his movements *in Paris and again in New York in 1948. Although neither of these experiences resulted in public performances, this piece of information is not widely known, and I wish I had included it in my article.*

Finally, I want to restate some Drama Review *policy: We warmly welcome letters-to-the-editor, replies, article corrections, etc. The function of the magazine is to expand and change contemporary and historical notions of performance. We want to encourage the making of new kinds of theatre. Any corrections or additions to articles would be useful for all of us. What I find objectionable in Welch's letter is a strange subtext that no one can write about Gurdjieff without her knowledge or approval although, in the case of my article, I was writing about a period in his life of which Welch had no first-hand experience.*

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NEW BOOKS

The Theatre of Erwin Piscator: Half a Century of Politics in Theatre. by John Willett. London: Eyre Methuen, 1978. 224 pp., incl. front matter. (9 ⅛" × 5 ⅞") 78 illus. £ 9.95 (hardcover).

A short, comprehensive book that covers all the phases of Piscator's long career. It contains chapters on "Approaches to a Political Theatre (1919-1927)," "The Piscator Companies (1927-1931)," "The Soviet Experience (1931-1936)," "The Paris Interlude (1936-1938)," "New York and the Dramatic Workshop (1939-1951)," and "The Long Road Home (1951-1966)." Some of Piscator's significant early productions are described in a separate chapter (the text on *Rasputin* is less than two pages); additional chapters discuss "The Political Theatre" and, finally, the "Legacy of a Political Theatre." There are 154 pages of text and photographs, a 24-page chronology of "events, productions, publications," notes, a bibliography, and an index.

The Political Theatre by Erwin Piscator. Translated with chapter introductions and notes by Hugh Rorrison. New York: Avon, 1978. 374 pp. (5¼" x 7⅛") 137 illus. $5.95 (paperback).

Long ago translated into other languages (including French and Japanese) from the original German of 1929, this classic of twentieth-century theatre literature finally appears in English. (One may wonder at the delay. In an undated foreword, Piscator explains that "this chapter of *German* theatre history should not be without interest for American readers"; he died in 1966.) Piscator's history of his theatrical work—"assembled in hectic sessions," according to the author, "during rehearsals for *The Merchant of Berlin*"—is enlarged, explained and made more cohesive by chapter introductions (about ninety pages) by the translator, Hugh Rorrison. Including elements of autobiography, journal, collage, history, source book, and theoretical statement, this volume is pertinent to several theatre disciplines and should be invaluable to scholars, historians and practitioners.

Makbeth adapted by Richard Schechner. Schulenberg, Texas: I.E. Clark, 1978. 78 pp. (5¼" x 8¼") $2.50 (softcover).

The script of the second (1969) production of The Performance Group, adapted by Schechner and the Group from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. "I started," writes Schechner in the introduction, "with one important premise . . . that Shakespeare is not so much the author of *Macbeth* as he is the provider of basic material out of which that production was made." The fifteen-page introduction describes the development of the piece. Brooks McNamara writes about his design of a maze through which the spectators entered, and twenty-nine pages are devoted to Paul Epstein's music and vocal arrangements, notated in various systems.

Bugaku Masks by Kyotaro Nishikawa. Translated and adapted by Monica Bethe. Tokyo, New York, San Francisco: Kodansha International, 1978. 194 pp. 7⅛" x 10½". 179 illustrations (26 in color). $14.95 (hardcover).

Not all Bugaku dances require masks, but each of those that do—unlike a No play—has its own particular mask. Today twenty-four such masked dances can be identified. This book surveys and describes the masks and dances according to type. Several of the many photographs are full-page. There is a chapter on the technical aspects of the Bugaku mask—including an explanation of how the moveable eyes and jaw of the Nasori mask function—and a chapter on "Inscriptions and Mask Makers." A particularly useful appendix lists the unfortunately few places to see Bugaku performances. Other appendices list dateable masks and the location of masks in Japan. There is a glossary, a bibliography and an index.

Theatre Papers: The Second Series (1978) ed. by Peter Hulton. Devon, England: Dartington College of Arts, 1978. 6" x 9½" $1.50 each (paperbound).

Individually bound essays, monographs, and interviews on a wide range of theatre topics. There are ten papers in this second series:

1. ***Bingo and the Bundle*** by Edward Bond and Howard Davies. 27 pp.
   Two interviews with playwright Bond and one with director Davies about two of Bond's plays.

2. ***Cricot 2 and The Theatre of Death*** by Tadeusz Kantor. 31 pp. 5 illus.
   Two essay/manifestos by Kantor about his work.

3. ***Cité Karl Marx, Bobigny, Paris. 1976. 1977.*** by Théâtre Quotidien and Georges Buisson. 27 pp. 7 illus.
   A statement by Georges Buisson, one of two directors of the Centre Culturel Karl Marx in a suburb of Paris, about their community-oriented theatre work. The original proposal of the Théâtre Quotidien. A listing of their workshops. A statement by Buisson and Alain Grasset.

4. ***Social Development and Educational Drama. A Reconceptualization.*** by Krysia Yardly and Terry Honess. 14 pp.
   A clinical psychologist and a social psychologist present a "personal construct theory" for education drama.

5. ***The Use of Imagery in Dance Training*** by Nancy Udow. 39 pp. Biblio.
   Sections include: "Technique, Mentation, and Mental Imagery," "The Balance of Mentation for the Dancer and Its Relation to Mental Imagery," "Receptivity to Internal Kinesthetic Cues Through Use of Mental Imagery," "Thought to Action: Imagery as an Organizational Agent for Movement," and "Imagery for an Individualized Body Concept and Approach to Technique."

6. ***The Theatre Practice of Anatoly Efros, a Contemporary Soviet Director*** by Maria Shevtsova. 49 pp. 3 illus.
   A one-page outline biography of Efros. General discussion; *Don Juan* (1974). An interview with Efros.

7. ***Fiction, Character and Narrative*** by Yvonne Rainer. 14 pp. 1 illus.
   A 3-page chronology of Rainer's work. An interview, primarily about *Kristina Talking Pictures*.

8. ***Feminism and Theatre*** by Gillian Hanna. 14 pp.
   An interview with a founder-member of an English feminist theatre group, The Monstrous Regiment.

9. ***Laboratory Theatre/ Grotowski/ The Mountain Project*** by Jennifer Kumiega.
   Grotowski's development from theatre to paratheatre. A description, in essay and in journal entries, of the Mountain Project.

10. ***From Action to Theatre Image*** by Peter Hulton. 19 pp.
    A theoretical and philosophical article that emphasizes the reality of the actor's projection upon the world—the actor's presence—rather than the representative, symbolic, or semiotic aspects of the performance.

The Voices and Hands of Bunraku by Barbara Adachi. Tokyo, New York, San Francisco: Kodansha International, 1978. 148 pp., incl. front matter. (9 ¾" × 9 ⅝") 68 illus. (39 in color). $19.50 (hardcover).

Both a picture book—many of the color photographs extend across two pages—and a behind-the-scenes look at the people and techniques of Japan's most famous puppet theatre. After a brief history of Bunraku, there is the recreation of a performance of *Katsuragawa Renri no Shigarami* in Osaka. Then there are a number of chapters that describe various Bunraku artists and, usually in their own words, their techniques and procedures: puppeteers, narrators, samisen players, offstage musicians, carver of heads, wig master, prop master, etc. An appendix lists the current members of the Bunraku troupe and their backstage workers and craftsmen; there is a glossary/index.

LIST OF BOOKS RECEIVED

HISTORY AND THEORY

Actress: Postcards from the Road by Elizabeth Ashley. M. Evans & Co., New York, N.Y., 1978 (hardcover) $10.

American Musical Theatre: A Chronicle by Gerald Bordman. Oxford University Press, New York, N.Y., 1978 (hardcover) $35.

The American Stage to World War I: A Guide to Information Sources, Don B. Wilmeth, ed. Gale Research Co., Detroit, Mich., 1978 (hardcover) $22.

Avantgardistische und traditionelle Aspekte im Theater von Eugene Ionesco by Lothar Schirmer. Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 1977 (paperback).

Background of Shakespeare's Thought by John Erskine Hankins. Archon Books, Hamden, Conn., 1978 (hardcover) $17.50.

Behind the Scenes in Two Worlds by Elaine Mensh and Harry Mensh. International Publishers, New York, N.Y., 1978 (paperback) $4.95.

The Bright Lights: A Theatre Life by Marian Seldes. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, Mass., 1978 (hardcover) $9.95.

Canada on Stage: Canadian Theatre Review Yearbook 1977, Don Rubin, ed. Theatre Review Publications, Downsview, Ont., 1978 (hardcover) $16.95.

Edward Bond: A Companion to the Plays by Malcolm Hay and Philip Roberts. TQ Publications, London, 1978 (paperback) £4.00.

The Esthetic of Jean Cocteau by Lydia Crowson. University Press of New England, Hanover, N.H., 1978 (hardcover) $10.

EveryOne: The Timeless Myth of "Everyman" Reborn by Frederick Franck. Doubleday & Co., Garden City, N.Y., 1978 (hardcover, paperback) $12.50, $6.95.

Here Come the Clowns by Lowell Swortzell. The Viking Press, New York, N.Y., 1978 (hardcover) $10.

I'll Be Seeing You: Poems 1962-1976 by Larry Fagin. Full Court Press, 1978 (hardcover) $9.95.

La metamorphose de la tragedie by Ion Omesco. Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1978 (paperback).

The Luis Armed Story by Tom Veitch. Full Court Press, 1978 (hardcover) $9.95.

Mime: A Playbook of Silent Fantasy by Kay Hamblin. Doubleday & Co., Garden City, N.Y., 1978 (paperback) $6.95.

The National Directory for the Performing Arts and Civic Centers, Beatrice Handel, ed. John Wiley & Sons, 1978 (hardcover, 2 vols.).

Otello: l'Eros negato by Alessandro Serpieri. Edizioni Il Formichiere, Milano, Italy, 1978 (paperback) £6.000.

People's Theatre by David Bradby and John McCormick. Croom Helm, London, 1978 (hardcover) $15.

Shakespeare's Game by William Gibson. Athenium Publishers, New York, N.Y., 1978 (hardcover) $10.95.

Shakespeare, Shylock and Kabbalah by Daniel Banes. Malcolm House Publications, Silver Springs, Md., 1978 (paperback) $3.60.

The Shape of Paradox: An Essay on Waiting for Godot by Bert O. States. University of California Press, Berkeley, Calif., 1978 (hardcover, paperback) $8.95, $2.65.

Siegfried Lenz by Brian Murdoch and Malcolm Read. Oswald Wolff, London, 1978 (hardcover) $8.95.

S.N. Behrman: The Major Plays by William R. Klink. Editions Rodopi N.V., Amsterdam, 1978 (paperback) $21.75.

The Theater Essays of Arthur Miller by Arthur Miller, Robert A. Martin, ed. Penguin Books, New York, N.Y., 1978 (paperback) $4.95.

Theatre Poems and Songs by Edward Bond. Eyre Methuen, London, 1978 (paperback) £2.50.

The Theatrical Photographs of Napoleon Sarony by Ben L. Bassham. The Kent State University Press, Kent, Ohio, 1978 (paperback).

The Tudor Play of Mind by Joel B. Altman. University of California Press, Berkeley, Calif., 1978 (hardcover) $18.50.

Who's Afraid of Edward Albee? by Foster Hirsch. Creative Arts Book Co., Berkeley, Calif., 1978 (paperback) $3.50.

PLAYS

Brimstone and Treacle by Dennis Potter. Eyre Methuen, London, 1978 (paperback) £1.50.

Five Plays by Ronald Ribman. Avon Books, New York, N.Y., 1978 (paperback) $2.95.

Golda and Notes on How to Turn a Phoenix into Ashes by William Gibson. Atheneum Publishers, New York, N.Y., 1978 (hardcover) $8.95.

Liberty Lane: A Ballad Play of Dublin by Austin Clarke. The Dolmen Press, Portlaoise, Ireland (hardcover) $18.50.

The Life of Meriasek: A Medieval Cornish Miracle Play, Markham Harris, tr. The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C., 1978 (hardcover) $15.95.

Modern American Scenes for Student Actors, Wynn Handman, ed. Bantam Books, New York, N.Y., 1978 (paperback) $2.95.

Selected Plays by Frank O'Hara. Full Court Press, 1978 (paperback) $3.50.

On Stage for Christmas, Sylvia E. Kamerman, ed. Plays, Inc., Boston, Mass., 1978 (hardcover) $10.95.

Twenty One-Act Plays: An Anthology for Amateur Performing Groups, Stanley Richards, ed. Doubleday & Co., Garden City, N.Y., 1978 (paperback) $6.95.